

# The Catholic Light

DIocese OF SCRANTON

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## Season of Giving



### Catholic Social Services provides holiday joy for thousands at Christmas

SCRANTON -- As she navigated tables filled with toys, Chary Isley was on a mission.

The mother of 11 children was looking to make Christmas special for each one of them.

Isley joined hundreds of other parents on Tuesday, Dec. 17, at the University of Scranton for a Christmas toy distribution put together by Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton and Friends of the Poor.

"Without this, there wouldn't be much of a Christmas," Isley admitted as she navigated a table of sporting goods. "Between bills and your normal life, Christmas just adds onto it."

Isley couldn't express enough thankfulness to all of the individuals, parishes, schools and groups, including the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots, which helped collect the toys.

"It is so appreciated. I can't even express how thankful I am," Isley said.

Mandy Delonti of Jermyn agrees.

As she shopped for toys for her three-year-old daughter, Delonti was almost overcome by the kindness of strangers.

"It's a wonderful thing that all these people come together and have an abundance of things for the children," Delonti said.

Like many young girls, Delonti's daughter loves princesses so she was able to get several "Frozen" items to go under the tree.

"She brought the holiday back in my life. I didn't have the holiday for a long, long time. I lost most of my family so she is my Christmas!" Delonti said. "Hopefully one of these days, when I get back on my feet, I can be part of how this (toy distribution) happens instead of being on the receiving end."

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DIOCESE OF SCRANTON**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the Catholic community of the Diocese of Scranton, are called through Baptism to imitate the servant leadership of Jesus Christ. In union with Our Holy Father, the Pope, we proclaim the Gospel faithfully, celebrate the sacraments joyfully, and boldly promote life, justice and peace in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania.

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[www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org)**Pope blesses Nativity scene statues, calls them signs of God's love**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis blessed hundreds of figurines of the baby Jesus -- ranging from tiny plastic figures to life-sized statues -- and encouraged children to make sure they have Nativity scenes at home.

After reciting the Angelus prayer Dec. 15, the third Sunday of Advent, Pope Francis did the traditional blessing of the "bambinelli," or statues of the infant Jesus, for children to put in manger at home, at school and in their parishes.

"Raise the statues up," the pope told the children. "I bless them from my heart."

Pope Francis then quoted from his new apostolic letter on the meaning and importance of the creche: "The Nativity scene is like a living Gospel...As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realize that so great is His love for us that he became one of us, so that we in turn might become one with Him."

In his main Angelus address, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of answering the Advent call to conversion in preparation for Christmas.

"We are called to recognize the face God chose to assume in Jesus Christ, humble and merciful," he said.

"Advent is a time of grace," the pope said. "It tells us it's not enough to believe in God; it's necessary to purify our faith each day."

The Advent journey is about preparing "to welcome not a character from a fable, but the God who calls us, gets us involved and who makes us choose," he said. "The Baby lying in the manger has the face of our neediest brothers and sisters," who deserve the care of the Christian community.



**Pilgrims hold up figurines of the Christ Child as Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 15, 2019. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)**

Nativity scenes were also on the pope's mind Dec. 16 when he met members of Italy's Catholic Action section for 11- to 13-year-olds for his annual exchange of Christmas greetings with them.

"I'm giving you some homework," he told them. "On Christmas Day pause in prayer and, with the same awe of the shepherds, look upon baby Jesus who came into the world to bring the love of God, who makes all things new."

"With his birth Jesus became a bridge between God and humanity, reconciling earth and heaven, restoring the unity of the whole human race," the pope said. "And today he asks you, too, to be little bridges where you live. You know there always is a need to build bridges, right?"

"What is better, building bridges or walls?" he asked them. "Bridges," they shouted.

Being bridges, bringing people together, "is not always easy," the pope

told them, "but if we are united to Jesus, we can do it."

Pope Francis also asked them to think about what "Christmas" means to Mary. "She and Joseph can teach us how to truly welcome Jesus, how to adore him and how to follow him day by day."



**The Christmas tree sparkles after a lighting ceremony in Saint Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 5, 2019. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)**

**Christmas Broadcasts on CTV**

SCRANTON — Christmas liturgies celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Peter will begin on Christmas Eve with a Solemn Pontifical Vigil Mass of Christmas on Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera will serve as principal celebrant and homilist for the Eucharistic celebration, which will be broadcast live on CTV: Catholic Television of the Diocese of Scranton.

In addition, CTV will air the following special programs during the Christmas season:

**Life of Christ: A Holy Land Pilgrimage** — The Gospels come to life in an epic journey through the places of Jesus' messianic ministry; Dec. 20 at 8 p.m.

**The First Christmas** — A colorful, animated production, narrated by Christopher Plummer, telling the story of the Birth of Jesus; Dec. 21 at 9 a.m.

**Advent Reflections** — "Fourth Week

**of Advent: Emmanuel, God Always With Us** — From Saint Catherine's Dominican Church in Newry, Ireland. Dominican Father David Barrins concludes the season of Advent with meditations on how the Incarnation reveals the immensity of God's love; Dec. 22 at 4 p.m.

**Choral Meditations on the Nativity** — Live performance of a musical composition celebrating the Birth of Our Lord, from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.; Dec. 24 at 10 p.m.

**Live Solemn Mass of Christmas Eve** — Celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.; Dec. 24 at 10:30 p.m.

**Midnight Mass from the Holy Land** — Eucharistic liturgy celebrating the Solemnity of the Nativity; Dec. 25 at 1 a.m.

**Solemn Mass of Christmas Eve in**

**Rome** — Mass with Pope Francis from Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican; Dec. 25 at 4 a.m.

**"Urbi et Orbi:" Pope Francis' Christmas Message & Blessing to the World** — Live Dec. 25 at 6 a.m. from Saint Peter's Square in Rome; encores at 3:30 and 9:30 p.m.

**Live Solemn Mass of Christmas from EWTN** — Christmas Mass celebrated by the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word from the EWTN Chapel in Irondale, Ala.; Dec. 25 at 8 a.m.

**Solemn Mass of Christmas Day** — Celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.; Dec. 25 at 12 noon.

**Catholic University of America's Christmas Concert** — Annual Christmas concert performance presented by The Catholic University of America in Washington; Dec. 25 at 5 p.m.



Dear Friends in Christ,

On December 1, I returned from a weeklong trip to Rome, along with the bishops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. We had just completed our ad limina visit during which every bishop provides a report the Holy See on the state of the Diocese entrusted to his care, celebrates Mass in the four great basilicas of Rome and has the privilege of meeting with our Holy Father. Needless to say, our visit, highlighted by a two-and-a-half hour conversation with Pope Francis, proved to be challenging, encouraging and hopeful, not only for us as bishops but also for our priests and the faithful people who make up the Church in the United States.

During our few days in Rome, like every visitor, I found myself walking across the great piazza in front of Saint Peter's Basilica, at times overwhelmed by the splendor of that space and at others, simply rushing from one meeting to the next. Whenever I was fortunate enough to pause and reflect a bit on where I stood and why, I couldn't help but focus upon a massive, new statue installed in the piazza by Pope Francis, entitled "Angels Unawares."

The statue, the first to be installed in Saint Peter's Square in over 400 years, is a 20-foot-long and 12-foot-high bronze and clay work of art depicting 140 immigrants of different cultures, faiths and ethnicities. The artist, Timothy Schmalz, took inspiration from pictures of refugees and immigrants throughout history — from persecuted Jews to Christians fleeing the Middle East, from Irish escaping the potato famine to Poles running from communism. Mary, Joseph and Jesus are also hidden among the figures. At the center of the crowd of 140 immigrants, the same number as the saintly figures topping the colonnade surrounding the piazza, are a pair of wings directed at the sky. The angel wings hearken to the title of the artwork, "Angels Unawares," which is taken directly from Hebrews 13:2: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

In a very literal way, the artwork challenged me to appreciate all that was taking place in the bustling piazza that I crossed several times a day during my few days in Rome. I found myself walking side by side with religious sisters, cardinals, tourists, shopkeepers and workers. And interspersed among all of us were the poor — beggars looking for a few coins — immigrants seeking a place to rest — angels in our midst — of whom we all seemed to be unaware. God with us!

Therein, my friends, lies the heart of what we celebrate at Christmas. When our need for a savior was great, God broke through the heavens and sent his son, Jesus, into our midst to give us hope and a way forward in life.

It was hardly by accident that God chose to have his son born into poverty amid a broken and hostile world. For human nature being what it is, regardless of the technological and scientific advances that have consumed our lives over the past two millennia and in particular, in the last few decades, we need the presence of God in our lives more than ever. People continue to war one with another. Terrorism and the consequences of hatred are rampant in all corners of the globe, including our own. Self-centeredness and pride tear apart relationships with those we love. Our Church continues to deal with the tragic consequences of the behavior of some of its very own leaders who abused the most innocent among us. The treasured gift of life is increasingly disregarded, especially in the unborn, the poor, disabled and elderly. And immigrants and refugees seeking a better life are still so often forced to the margins of society by discrimination, bigotry and hatred.

Yet, in a world that seems to have gone awry due to a lack of respect for lives that are made in the very image of the Christ whose birth we celebrate, we have reason to hope. Through the wonder of the incarnation, God is in our midst and Jesus walks among us — especially in the poor. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminds us of this reality, "We are called to find Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them."

When all is said and done, we are all poor in one way or another, aren't we? Some of us are poor because of a lack of resources. Many of us are poor due to a lack of welcome, due to unfair judgment by others, and due to loneliness that comes from a lack of love and forgiveness. On our own, we will never be able to provide ourselves with the meaning, purpose and peace that each of us so desperately seeks in life.

Yet, when we are humble enough to open our hearts to the presence of God, to admit our need for a Savior and to, in turn, follow the pattern of Jesus' life in service of our sisters and brothers, we discover just how rich we are. Through the grace of God, each of us is given the power to discover authentic love and a reason to hope...And if we look carefully enough at our lives, we will surely recognize the presence of angels, even if the rest of our world is unaware of their presence.

Thank you for the privilege of walking with you in faith as your Bishop. Thank you as well for reflecting the presence of Christ within your lives and for respecting Christ's presence in the lives of those whom God has entrusted to your care.

With prayers for a blessed Christmas, I am Faithfully yours in Christ,

+ *Joseph C. Bambera*

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Scranton



Queridos amigos en Cristo,

El 1 de diciembre, regresé de un viaje de una semana a Roma, junto a los obispos de Pensilvania y Nueva Jersey. Acabábamos de completar nuestra visita "ad limina" durante la cual cada obispo proporciona un informe de la Santa Sede sobre el estado de la Diócesis confiado a su cuidado, celebra la misa en las cuatro grandes basílicas de Roma y tiene el privilegio de reunirse con nuestro Santo Padre. Sin lugar a duda tengo que decir que nuestra visita, destacada por una conversación de dos horas y media con el Papa Francisco, resultó ser desafiante, alentadora y de esperanza, no solo para nosotros como obispos, sino también para nuestros sacerdotes y las personas fieles que componen la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos.

Durante nuestros pocos días en Roma, como todos los visitantes, me encontré caminando por la gran plaza frente a la Basílica de San Pedro, a veces abrumado por el esplendor de ese espacio y en otros, simplemente corriendo de una reunión a otra. Siempre que pude hacer una pausa y reflexionar un poco sobre dónde estaba parado y por qué, no pude evitar centrarme en una nueva estatua masiva instalada en la plaza por el Papa Francisco, titulada "Ángeles sin saberlo."

La primera estatua que se instaló en la Plaza de San Pedro en más de 400 años, es una obra de arte de bronce y arcilla de 20 pies de largo y 12 pies de altura que representa a 140 inmigrantes de diferentes culturas, religiones y etnias. El artista, Timothy Schmalz, se inspiró en imágenes de refugiados e inmigrantes a lo largo de la historia: desde judíos perseguidos hasta cristianos que huían de Oriente Medio, desde irlandeses escapando de la hambruna de la papa hasta polacos que huyeron del comunismo. María, José y Jesús también están ocultos entre las figuras. En el centro de la multitud de 140 inmigrantes, el mismo número que las figuras santas que coronan la columnata que rodea la plaza, son un par de alas dirigidas al cielo. Las alas de los ángeles escuchan el título de la obra de arte, "Ángeles sin saberlo," que está tomada directamente de Hebreos 13: 2: "No descuides mostrar hospitalidad a los extraños, ya que algunos han entretenido a los ángeles sin saberlo."

De una manera muy literal, la obra de arte me desafió a apreciar todo lo que estaba ocurriendo en la bulliciosa plaza que cruzaba varias veces al día durante mi tiempo en Roma. Me encontré caminando al lado de hermanas religiosas, cardenales, turistas, comerciantes y trabajadores. Y entre todos nosotros estaban los pobres, los mendigos que buscaban algunas monedas, los inmigrantes que buscaban un lugar para descansar, los ángeles en medio de nosotros, de los cuales todos parecíamos ignorar. Dios con nosotros! Ahí, mis amigos, se encuentra el corazón de lo que celebramos en Navidad. Cuando nuestra necesidad de un salvador era grande, Dios rompió los cielos y envió a su hijo, Jesús, a nuestro medio para darnos esperanza y un camino a seguir en la vida.

No fue por casualidad que Dios eligió que su hijo naciera en la pobreza en medio de un mundo roto y hostil. Para que la naturaleza humana sea lo que es, independientemente de los avances tecnológicos y científicos que han consumido nuestras vidas durante los últimos dos milenios y, en particular, en las últimas décadas, necesitamos la presencia de Dios en nuestras vidas más que nunca. La gente continúa peleando unos contra otros. El terrorismo y las consecuencias del odio son desenfrenada en todos los rincones del mundo, incluido el nuestro. El egocentrismo y el orgullo desgarran las relaciones con los que amamos. Nuestra Iglesia continúa lidiando con las trágicas consecuencias del comportamiento de algunos de sus propios líderes que abusaron de los más inocentes entre nosotros. El preciado regalo de la vida es cada vez más ignorado, especialmente en los no nacidos, los pobres, los incapacitados y los ancianos. Y los inmigrantes y refugiados que buscan una vida mejor todavía se ven obligados con frecuencia a los márgenes de la sociedad por la discriminación, la intolerancia y el odio.

Sin embargo, en un mundo que parece haber salido torcido debido a la falta de respeto por la vida que se hacen frente la imagen del Cristo cuyo nacimiento celebramos, tenemos razones para esperar. A través de la maravilla de la encarnación, Dios está en medio de nosotros y Jesús camina entre nosotros, especialmente en los pobres. En su exhortación apostólica *Evangelii Gaudium*, el Papa Francisco nos recuerda esta realidad: "Estamos llamados a encontrar a Cristo en los pobres, a prestar nuestra voz a sus causas, pero también a ser sus amigos, escucharlos, hablar por ellos. y abrazar la misteriosa sabiduría que Dios desea compartir con nosotros a través de ellos."

Cuando todo está dicho y hecho, todos somos pobres de una forma u otra, ¿no? Algunos de nosotros somos pobres debido a la falta de recursos. Muchos de nosotros somos pobres debido a la falta de bienvenida, debido al juicio injusto de otros, y debido a la soledad que proviene de la falta de amor y perdón. Por nuestra cuenta, nunca podremos proporcionarnos el significado, el propósito y la paz que cada uno de nosotros busca tan desesperadamente en la vida.

Sin embargo, cuando somos lo suficientemente humildes como para abrir nuestros corazones a la presencia de Dios, y admitir nuestra necesidad de un Salvador y, a su vez, seguir un estilo de vida que Jesús pone al servicio de nuestras hermanas y hermanos, descubrimos cuán rico estamos. A través de la gracia de Dios, cada uno de nosotros tiene el poder de descubrir el amor auténtico y una razón para tener esperanza...Y si miramos con suficiente atención nuestras vidas, seguramente reconoceremos la presencia de los ángeles, incluso si el resto de nuestro mundo no es consciente de su presencia.

Gracias por el privilegio de caminar con ustedes en fe como obispo. Gracias también por reflejar la presencia de Cristo en sus vidas y por respetar la presencia de Cristo en las vidas de aquellos a quienes Dios ha confiado a su cuidado.

Con oraciones por una bendita Navidad, estoy Fielmente tuyo en Cristo,

+ *Joseph C. Bambera*

Reverendísimo Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.  
Obispo de Scranton





# Catholic Social Services spearheads holiday toy distributions throughout region

Continued from Page 1

Throughout the third week of December, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton helps bring the magic of Christmas to thousands of families throughout northeastern Pennsylvania.

Brooke Fetsock of Scranton has helped volunteer at the Scranton toy distribution for the last three years. She loves getting to interact with the parents and learn about their children.

“One woman I helped today was so excited to shop for her kids and get the presents and so excited to go home and wrap them and she was so happy. She smiled the whole time. She actually started to cry a little because of how happy she was,” Fetsock said.

The toy distribution in Scranton on Tuesday followed a similar distribution that took place in Wilkes-Barre on Monday, Dec. 16. In Wilkes-Barre, the toy distribution was organized through the Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen and held at Saint Mary’s Church of the Immaculate Conception.

“I love it,” said Krystal Jenceleski of Plymouth, who was able to select toys for her four children. “This makes it so much easier for Christmas, especially for big families. I enjoy coming here and the gifts are great. I’m very grateful.”

In Wilkes-Barre, more than 1,300 gifts were distributed, helping to brighten the holiday for more than 650 children.

In Scranton, more than 6,000 gifts were distributed, benefitting nearly 1,700 kids.

Ashante Anderson of Pittston was also able to bring home some toys for her two young children.



**More than 6,000 gifts were distributed by Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton and Friends of the Poor at the University of Scranton on Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019. (Photo/Eric Deabill)**

“It’s very helpful,” Anderson said. “Especially when you’re employed and you’re on a budget and you can barely afford food. To be honest, I can’t really afford toys. I appreciate it very much.”

For the last 15 years, the annual toy drive and distribution in Wilkes-Barre has been coordinated by Dianne Lucas Colleran, who first began volunteering with her late husband, Frank. Colleran says about eight devoted volunteers work on the toy drive for several weeks each year in the weeks leading up to the distribution, sometimes working more than eight hours per day. On the day of the distribution, nearly 20 volunteers are on hand.

“It makes me feel good inside,” Colleran said. “No kid should wake up without anything under the tree on Christmas. Not one child.”

In addition to Wilkes-Barre and

Scranton, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton held similar toy distributions in Carbondale and Hazleton.

Thanks to such efforts, Nicole Suprum of Edwardsville was also able to acquire gifts for her three children. Suprum said the availability of such toys helps make the entire holiday season less stressful.

“It’s a blessing,” she said. “As a single mother with three children, it helps me out a lot. I like to see the smiles on my kids’ faces in the morning.”



**Ashante Anderson of Pittston says the distribution of Christmas toys by Catholic Social Services in Wilkes-Barre is appreciated by working families on a tight budget. (Photo/Alan K. Stout)**

## Catholic Social Services distributes holiday food bags and turkeys



**Ron Marrero of Glen Lyon picks up food and a turkey from Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen in Wilkes-Barre on Monday, Dec. 16, 2019. (Photo/Alan K. Stout)**

The toy distributions involve a lot of preparation. At each site, hundreds of families pre-register in advance and details must be coordinated between the hosting sites, the Toys for Tots program and the parishes and community groups that collect and deliver toys. But for those who tirelessly work on such toy drives throughout the holiday season, it’s all worth it, especially in knowing that Santa was able to visit everyone.

“They’re very thankful,” says Colleran of the families served. “We try to do the best we can. The hearts of the children can’t be broken. There will not be a child without a gift. There simply will not.”

Helping individuals and families in need is one of the core missions of Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton. In addition to providing help during the holidays, the agency operates the Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen which provides warm meals every day of the year. Catholic Social Services also operates several shelters located in Scranton, Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton and operates several programs that benefit families and youth.

If you would like more information about Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton, visit [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org) or call (570) 207-3808.

In addition to the collection and distribution of Christmas toys, Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Scranton also assists families in need with the distribution of holiday food bags and turkeys.

In Wilkes-Barre, at Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen, 800 bags of non-perishable foods were offered to those in need on Monday, Dec 16. Frozen turkeys were also available.

In Hazleton, approximately 950 pre-registered families received bags of non-perishable foods and a holiday turkey. Catholic Social Services partnered with United Charities, Faith Assembly of God Church and the Freeland Food Bank for that distribution. The event was held at Our Lady of Grace/Queen of Heaven Church.



Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Swoyersville



Roughly 50 people joined together to make pierogies on Monday, Dec. 16, at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. Volunteers made 700 dozen pierogies over the course of two days in December. The parish makes the tasty treats during Advent, Lent and for the parish festival in the summer.

Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, Hanover Township



Hundreds of people from all across northeastern and north central Pennsylvania visited Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish on Saturday, Dec. 14, for the eighth annual Cookie Walk. For \$9 a container, visitors could choose from more than 30 different varieties of homemade cookies.

Epiphany Parish, Sayre



Rev. Andrew S. Hvozdivic, pastor, Epiphany Parish, performs a blessing at a Wreaths Across America ceremony at Epiphany Cemetery on Saturday, Dec. 14. National Wreaths Across America Day is an event dedicated to remembering the sacrifices veterans have made in wars since the American Revolution.



SCRANTON – While many people regard the days leading up to Christmas as a joyful time, for some it can be very stressful and even a time of great struggle.

As a result, Saint John Neumann Parish, Nativity of Our Lord Church, will offer its first “Blue Christmas Mass” on Christmas morning, Dec. 25, at 9:30 a.m.

“We read about it in some other places and we, as a team, sat down and said, ‘Should we do this?’ and we all said yes,” Rev. Michael Bryant, pastor, said.

The Blue Christmas Mass will be a Mass for people and their family or friends who might feel at odds with – or estranged from – the general feeling of joy and happiness at this time of year.

“It’s not necessarily people that are in deep depression but it’s people remembering that they’ve lost loved ones who are not going to be around this year, it’s people who are struggling to make ends meet financially or it’s people who

are trying to take care of an ill parent or child who has a chronic disease,” Rev. Bryant said.

The Mass will seek to comfort people by reminding them that they are not alone. While the Mass will still focus on Christmas itself, the birth of Christ, organizers hope to emphasize God’s hope and joy.

“It is open to anyone,” Rev. Bryant said. “It’s Christmas. Our theme this year has been HOPE so we want to emphasize that there is hope for all of God’s people!” Rev. Bryant added.

The music for the Mass is still being finalized, but it is expected to be mellow, relaxing and peaceful without triumphant organ fanfares or majestic hymns.

Saint John Neumann Parish, Nativity of Our Lord Church, is located at 633 Orchard Street in South Scranton.

For more information, please contact Saint John Neumann Parish at (570) 344-6159 or check out the parish website at [www.stjnparish.org](http://www.stjnparish.org) or its Facebook page.

Did you know?

You may make a gift to your Parish or to the Diocesan Annual Appeal directly from your IRA

- Distributions must be sent directly to your parish or to the Diocese by the plan administrator of your IRA. You may make a gift up to \$100,000 annually.
- Since no tax is incurred on the withdrawal, gifts do not qualify for a charitable deduction, but may be counted toward an individual’s minimum required distribution.
- Retirement assets in 401(k), 403(b), SEP, or SIMPLE plans do not qualify, but may be rolled into a new or existing IRA.



If you are 70½ or older and have a traditional individual retirement account, you can use all or part of your required minimum distribution to support your parish or the Diocesan Annual Appeal without having to count the transfers as income for federal tax purposes.



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# "He challenged us and encouraged us..."

## Bishop Bambara reflects on pilgrimage to Rome and meeting with Pope Francis

VATICAN CITY – While many families in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania spent Thanksgiving discussing football and politics over turkey dinner, Bishop Joseph C. Bambara was in Rome for a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Pope Francis.

The meeting, which involved all of the bishops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, was an important part of the bishops' "ad limina" visit.

"He was welcoming, he was disarming in terms of his ordinary, simple demeanor, he was funny, he was extremely well-versed on our situation locally and was very encouraging," Bishop Bambara said reflecting on the meeting with the Holy Father.

Pope Francis greeted the bishops by saying "Happy Thanksgiving" at the beginning of their discussion. He then encouraged them to ask questions, offer observations or seek input on any situation they wanted to.

The wide-ranging conversation focused on topics including the clerical sexual abuse scandal, ways to be responsive to survivors of sexual abuse and the decreasing number of Catholics in many parts of the East Coast.

"He was very, very in tune to where we are," Bishop Bambara said.

At the time of the meeting on Nov. 28, Pope Francis had just returned from a weeklong trip to Thailand and Japan. Bishop Bambara said the Holy Father's comments were very much "like a father."

"He challenged us, in the best way, to be sensitive to our priests because of what they're dealing with on the front lines," Bishop Bambara said. "He encouraged us to be supportive of them and all our people."

Bishop Bambara says one of the main themes, woven into many of Pope Francis' comments, was the notion of synodality.

"He was encouraging us to face decision-making and our future in a collaborative way with our people, in a thoughtful and discerning matter and really to encourage us to engage the entire people of God," Bishop Bambara said.



**Pope Francis greets Bishop Joseph C. Bambara during a meeting with U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Nov. 28, 2019. (Photo Courtesy Vatican Media)**



**Top: Pope Francis meets with U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Nov. 28, 2019.**

**Bottom: Pope Francis poses for a photo with the U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey who were making their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses.**

The bishop was glad to see that synodality is a topic that is important to Pope Francis.

"I found that very, very encouraging. It reflects a lot of the agenda that we've set forth for our own Diocese and the vision that we put forward in my pastoral letter when I first started ten years ago as bishop," he added.

### AD LIMINA VISIT PURPOSE

The bishops' meeting with Pope Francis came during their visits "ad limina apostolorum" – to the threshold of the apostles.

As the "Directory for the 'Ad Limina' Visit" makes clear, the bishops' visits are a pilgrimage with a "very definite purpose: that is, the strengthening of their own responsibility as successors of the Apostles and of their hierarchical communion with the Successor of Peter."

Throughout November, December, January and February,

a total of 15 groups of U.S. bishops will travel to Rome; the visits should conclude Feb. 22 with the bishops of the Eastern Catholic churches in the United States.

At the heart of the bishops' pilgrimage are Masses at the Rome basilicas of Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint John Lateran and Saint Mary Major.

Bishop Bambara's visit to Rome Nov. 25 – Nov. 30 was his second ad limina pilgrimage. He was joined by Monsignor Thomas M. Muldowney, V.G., Vicar General of the Diocese of Scranton and Moderator of the Curia.

The U.S. bishops' last "ad limina" visits were eight years ago, in 2011-2012.

"It really does challenge you. It gives you the opportunity to step aside for a time to reflect upon what you're called to do and be as a bishop," Bishop Bambara said.

For Bishop Bambara, the Masses at the basilicas of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Outside the Walls held special meaning.

"Those Masses were powerful moments to reflect upon the gift of faith and the call of Jesus to follow after Him. They afforded all of us the opportunity to think about Saint Paul and the message that he preached and proclaimed beyond Jerusalem to the whole Mediterranean world and Saint Peter, the one to whom Jesus entrusted the leadership of the Church!" Bishop Bambara said.

The bishop added that being in those locations was both inspiring and humbling.

"In reflecting upon the great gift of our Catholic faith and the beginnings of our Church, you realize that for all of our brokenness and imperfections, you are a tiny part of something that has touched our world for 2,000 years and continues to provide hope and meaning to people everywhere!" the bishop added.

### MEETINGS WITH HOLY SEE OFFICES

In addition to the meeting with Pope Francis and celebrating Masses at the four basilicas, Bishop Bambara also participated in numerous meetings at various offices of the Roman Curia.

The offices that the bishops met with included: Laity, Family and Life; Christian Unity; Congregation for Clergy and the Protection of Minors, among many others.

"The meetings were markedly different," Bishop Bambara said, comparing them to his first ad limina experience. "They were engaging meetings that acknowledged the challenges and opportunities that we face as leaders of Dioceses and suggested how we can best respond to the needs of the people God has entrusted to our care."

Prior to arriving in Rome, the bishops of every diocese prepare detailed reports on the life of the Catholic Church in their region.



**Bishop Bambara joins his fellow bishops to pray before a relic of Jesus' manger after concelebrating Mass at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome Nov. 25, 2019. (CNS photo/Junno Arocho Esteves)**



**U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey pray at the tomb of Saint Paul after concelebrating Mass at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome Nov. 27, 2019. (CNS photo/Robert Duncan)**

With 13 total dioceses represented between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Bishop Bambara said many of the dioceses are facing similar challenges.

"They clearly understood what is going on in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," the bishop said.

### REALIZING THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHURCH

With Bishop Bambara now back home in the Diocese, he has been able to reflect on the meaning of his pilgrimage.

"It helps me realize the universality of the Church," Bishop Bambara said.

While many people experience faith in their individual parishes, the bishop said there is so much to celebrate globally.

"We are a part of this incredible reality of faith that has grown and flourished from the tiniest of roots in the Middle East 2,000 years ago

and touches this whole world and we realize how much we are all alike and how much we are all struggling and looking for the same meaning and purpose and hope in our lives," he said.

Bishop Bambara said a new sculpture in Saint Peter's Square helped showcase that for him.

On Sept. 29, Timothy P. Schmalz's sculpture on the theme of refugees and migration, "Angels Unawares," was unveiled on the occasion of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The artwork was the first to be added to Saint Peter's Square in 400 years.

The 20-foot-long and 12-foot-high bronze and clay statue depicts 140 immigrants of different cultures, faiths and ethnicities.

"I think it is extremely meaningful," the bishop said. "Forever, people have been searching for something more. That search began with Jesus,



**U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey concelebrate Mass at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome Nov. 26, 2019. (Photo/Anne-Marie Welsh, Diocese of Erie)**



**The U.S. bishops from Pennsylvania and New Jersey concelebrate Mass in the crypt of Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 29, 2019. (Photo/Anne-Marie Welsh, Diocese of Erie)**

Mary and Joseph fleeing into Egypt, immigrants, refugees in a foreign land."

As he traveled around Saint Peter's Square, Bishop Bambara reflected upon the presence of God in the people he encountered.

"Wherever you walk, especially around the Vatican, you see beggars looking for help. It struck me that, there is something sacred about their presence. You realize that God is present not just in the places that you'd think most obvious, the big magnificent church buildings, as beautiful and as meaningful as they are to our faith tradition," Bishop Bambara explained. "Pope Francis, in a very unique way, has reminded us time and again that God is very much present in these simple souls who are wandering about and in the people who put a coin in their cup. Being a part of that exchange touched me deeply, more than ever before."



**Monsignor Muldowney, left, and Bishop Bambara pose with Father Shane L. Kirby, right, who is currently serving in the Congregation for the Clergy, a department of the Roman Curia.**



**Sister Mary Micaela Hoffmann, R.S.M., a native of Towanda, visits with Bishop Bambara while in Rome on Nov. 27, 2019.**



**Monsignor Thomas M. Muldowney, V.G., Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, is among a group who met with Pope Francis in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Nov. 28, 2019. (Photo Courtesy Vatican Media)**



**"Angels Unawares," which depicts a group of migrants and refugees on a boat, is currently on display in Saint Peter's Square.**



# Father Zavacki Dies; Served as Diocesan Priest for 62 Years

KINGSTON—Bishop Joseph C. Bambera served as principal celebrant of a Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial for Father Richard A. Zavacki, pastor emeritus of the former Saint Hedwig Parish in Kingston, on December 18, at Saint Ignatius Loyola Parish.

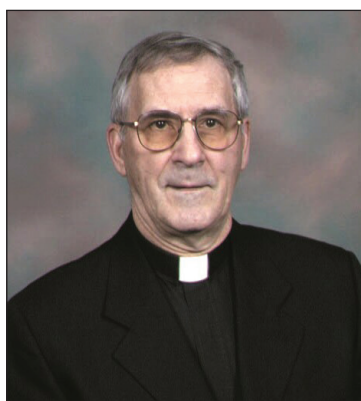
A priest of the Diocese of Scranton for 62 years, Father Zavacki died Dec. 11 at Allied Meade Street Skilled Nursing in Wilkes-Barre.

Born in Wyoming on Dec. 26, 1931, son of the late Anthony and Sophia Lapinski Zavacki, Father Zavacki was a graduate of Wyoming Memorial High School. After attending King's College

in Wilkes-Barre, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Mary's College in Orchard Lake, Mich., in 1953.

Father Zavacki completed his theological studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary, Orchard Lake, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 15, 1957, in the Cathedral of Saint Peter by Most Rev. Jerome D. Hannan, fifth bishop of Scranton.

Following ordination, Father Zavacki was assigned as assistant pastor *pro tem* at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Lake Silkworth. Shortly thereafter, he served as assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Parish, Luzerne, until 1960,



**Father Richard A. Zavacki**

when he was appointed assistant pastor of Saint Joseph Parish, Hudson.

He served in Hudson for 16 years until he received his

first pastoral assignment, at Saint Martha Parish, Fairmount Springs, in September of 1976. During his pastorate at Saint Martha's, he was appointed director of religious formation at Bishop Hoban High School in Wilkes-Barre in 1979.

In January 1987, Father Zavacki was reassigned and named pastor of Saint Hedwig Parish, where he would serve in his longest pastorate for the next 20 years. The well-known Kingston shepherd ministered to the parish community until his retirement and appointment as Saint Hedwig's pastor emeritus in July of 2007.

Father Zavacki celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination with a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Bambera in 2017.

Surviving are a sister, Barbara Holmes, Asheville, N.C.; a nephew, Gary and his wife, Jean, Exeter; and great-nephews, Michael Zavacki, Atlanta, Ga., and Richard Zavacki, Downingtown.

In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by two brothers, Edwin Zavacki and Dr. John Zavacki.

Interment was to be conducted at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Carverton.

## Knights of Columbus support seminarians



Members of the Knights of Columbus at a meeting with Bishop Bambera on Nov. 19 were, from left: PA State Chaplain Rev. (COL) Gregory D'Emma; Frank Socha, Membership Liaison for the Diocese of Scranton; Bishop Bambera; PA State Deputy Mark Jago; Life Director John Meenan and PA State Warden Bernard (Ron) Butkera.

A delegation of Knights of Columbus recently met with Bishop Bambera to present donations to support our seminarians and retired religious and to discuss current and planned initiatives statewide and in the Diocese.

During their annual Episcopal Visit, State Chaplain Rev. (COL) Gregory D'Emma and State Deputy Mark Jago reviewed the Knights of Columbus' Faith in Action Programs and affirmed their commitment to provide moral, financial and spiritual support to our future priests and religious at all stages of their formation. Through the Refund Support Vocations Program (RSVP), councils and parish families raise

money to support seminarians or religious in formation in their area.

During their discussion with Bishop Bambera, the Knights also discussed statewide legislation and encouraged all Catholics to become informed on the issues, live by their principles and not be afraid to openly discuss their faith with others.

The Knights of Columbus encourages people to choose life through public support of the pro-life causes. The Knights discussed the March for Life in Washington, D.C. and the inaugural March for Life in Harrisburg that is scheduled for outside the state capitol on Monday, May 18, 2020. The goal of each Knights Council is

to get others in their parish and community involved and aware of the Knights commitment to defending the right to life of every human being from the moment of conception to natural death.

The Knights also continue to foster a close working relationship between pastors and Grand Knights, so that Knights can be of assistance in coordinating faith and family activities in parishes.

The Knights are always looking to recruit new members, especially in the 18-35 age range.

For more information on any of the Knights activities, or to find ways to become involved, visit [www.pakofc.us](http://www.pakofc.us).

## PA House members continue to champion pro-life movement

Just hours after passing the Republican-controlled legislature, Governor Tom Wolf vetoed legislation that would have prohibited abortions because of a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome on Nov. 21, 2019.

"This legislation is a restriction on women and medical professionals and interferes with women's health care and the crucial decision-making between patients and their physicians," Pennsylvania's Democratic governor wrote in his veto message. "There is no evidence that this bill is needed in Pennsylvania."

Currently, five states have enacted legislation prohibiting abortion based on a diagnosis of Down syndrome, including Indiana and Louisiana in 2016, Ohio and North Dakota in 2017, and Kentucky in 2019. Statutes like the Down Syndrome Protection Act allow state legislators across the country to challenge *Roe v. Wade's* U.S. Supreme Court Ruling.

Pennsylvania Speaker of the House Mike Turzai and Representative Kate Klunk introduced the Down Syndrome Protection Act in April 2019 as House Bill 321. This bill prohibited the abortion of any child on the sole basis of a diagnosis of possible Down syndrome. Representative Klunk and Speaker Turzai held a press conference in support of their bill on March 20, 2019.

During the 2017-18 Session, Speaker Turzai previously prime-sponsored the same legislation alongside then-Representative Judy Ward as House Bill 2050. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed HB2050 on April 16, 2018 with a bipartisan, veto-proof vote of 139-56. 115

Republicans and 24 Democrats voted to protect those unborn children with Down syndrome. Unfortunately, the Senate failed to bring the bill forward for a vote in the prior session.

Representative Klunk and Speaker Turzai were determined to get the Down Syndrome Protection Act to the Governor's desk this 2019-20 session. The state House of Representatives passed House Bill 321 on May 14, 2019 with a bipartisan vote of 117-76. 102 Republicans and 15 Democrats voted to protect these vulnerable unborn children. On November 20, 2019, the state Senate passed HB 321 by a vote of 27-22, with 25 Republicans in support, as well as one Democrat and one Independent.

Dr. Karen Gaffney, an advocate in support of the bill last session and public speaker with Down syndrome, visited our Capitol to emphasize the urgent need to ban the eugenic practice of eradicating Down syndrome through abortion.

"Those of us with Down syndrome and our families face a very difficult future," Dr. Gaffney said. "We face the possibility of wiping out all of the tremendous progress we have made. Just as we are making so much progress, a whole industry has grown up focused on prenatal screening – screening that would end our lives before we take our first breath. Now that you can test for Down syndrome before birth, there are many 'experts' in the medical community that say this extra chromosome we carry around is not compatible with life. Not compatible with life? After everything we have done, I would say we are more than compatible. We are what life is all about. Our lives are worth living and our lives are worth learning about."



# Diocese begins process of looking towards the future

SCRANTON – With a new decade now just days away, the Diocese of Scranton is beginning the process of taking a good look at the life of its parishes in order to project a future vision in response to God's call.

On the second Sunday of Advent, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera delivered a homily by video to all parishes, in which he invited parishioners to begin the process of thinking about the challenges and opportunities that the next decade will present.

“What do we see when we look around us and confront changing realities in our world – in our society and in our church?” Bishop Bambera asked in his homily. “How are we called to respond in faithfulness to the Gospel values and to the promises of God in which we have placed our hope?”

Northeastern and north central Pennsylvania have experienced a number of changes that warrant this examination.

In terms of demographics, an aging population and shifts in the make-up of some communities factor into the situation. The expected diminishment in the number of ordained priests that will be available to serve as full-time pastors will also play a part.

“Looking squarely at each of these and other realities impacting our present and future parish life, we must work together to create a manner of responding which is innovative, achievable and respectful of the mission that we have been given as baptized followers of Jesus,” Bishop Bambera said.

Unlike the process of consolidations that took place a decade ago that resulted in a radically different profile of parishes serving more than 250,000 Catholics, the bishop is simply asking parishioners to look at how we wisely use our resources.

“In engaging this process, while every parish is similar in what it's been

called to do and to be, each parish will respond in ways that are unique to its situation and circumstance. When faced with change, such as the retirement of a pastor, the need to address the condition of aging parish buildings or a diminishment of parishioners due to changing demographics, each parish will be asked to reflect upon and propose ways in which it can best move forward in a manner that continues to give life to our faith and to our responsibility as Christian disciples,” the bishop said.

Pastors and Parish Life Coordinators have already started the process of looking towards the future and are expected to broaden

the conversation with parish leadership and all parishioners in the coming months.

“We continue to work very hard to foster vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life. We so desperately need the unique gifts of those who are called to these vocations within the Church, especially those of our priests. Yet, each of you, because of your baptism, also has a vocational calling to which we need you to respond,” Bishop Bambera said. “Your involvement in the life of the Church and in this process, more than anything else, will give us a vision into your particular parish and, in turn, will serve the needs of our Diocese as a whole.”

## CLERGY APPOINTMENT

His Excellency, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, announces the following appointment, effective as indicated:

**Reverend Alfred J. Vito**, from Chaplain, Mercy Center, Dallas, to Leave of Absence for reasons of health. Effective November 8, 2019.

## Bishop Bambera issues statement regarding Jersey City shooting



**Jewish men stand at the scene Dec. 11, 2019, of a gun battle that took place the day before involving two men around a kosher market in Jersey City, N.J. Six people, including the two suspects, were killed in a furious battle that filled the streets of Jersey City with sound of heavy gunfire for hours, authorities said. (CNS photo/ Lloyd Mitchell, Reuters)**

JERSEY CITY, N.J. -- A brazen attack on a kosher supermarket that left three civilians and a 39-year-old police officer dead on Dec. 10, 2019 is being investigated as an act of domestic terrorism targeting both the Jewish community and police officers.

“We believe the suspects held views that reflected hatred of Jewish people as well as law enforcement,” New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said. “The evidence points toward acts of hate. We’re investigating this as a potential act of terrorism fueled by anti-Semitic and anti-law enforcement beliefs.”

The shooting followed several deadly attacks at U.S. synagogues within the past 14 months, including the attack in October 2018 at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh that claimed 11 lives.

Bishop Joseph C. Bambera serves as chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

In response to deadly attack in New Jersey, he released the following statement:

“The recent attack on a Kosher Market in Jersey City, alongside many

other recent hateful and at times violent actions, have highlighted the importance of, once again, publicly condemning any and all forms of anti-Semitism whether in thought, word or action. The past has taught us silence and passivity can result in the advancement of the worst crimes humanity can commit.

“The Catholic Church has an irrevocable commitment to the Jewish community. This commitment is clear and straightforward: anti-Semitism is anti-Christian and should not be tolerated in any form. At the Second Vatican Council, in *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic Church articulated, ‘Mindful of the inheritance she shares with the Jews, the Church decries hatreds, persecutions, and manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.’

“We offer our prayerful support for all victims of anti-Semitic violence and their families. It is our hope that through continued respectful collaboration and dialogue with our Jewish brothers and sisters Catholics will help build a culture that completely rejects anti-Semitism.”



## BISHOP BAMBERA'S SCHEDULE

**December 23** - Advent Mass for Chancery Staff  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:10 p.m.

**December 24** - Christmas Eve Vigil Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 4:00 p.m.

**December 24** - Midnight Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, Midnight

**December 25** - Christmas Mass  
Gino Merli Veterans Center, Scranton, 9:30 a.m.

**December 29** - Feast of the Holy Family Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 10:00 a.m.

**January 2** - Mass - Capuchin Sisters  
Tunkhannock, 5:00 p.m.

**January 4** - Saint Vincent de Paul Kitchen Visit  
Wilkes-Barre, 9:00 a.m.

**January 4** - Filipino Community Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 6:00 p.m.

**January 5** - Epiphany of the Lord Mass  
Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, 12:15 p.m.

**January 6-11** - Pennsylvania Bishops Retreat



# Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was recently celebrated throughout the Diocese of Scranton, particularly in the areas of the Diocese with large Latino populations.

The annual observance commemorates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to a Mexican Indian, Juan Diego, in December of 1531.

The Blessed Mother's message of hope continues to inspire people of Hispanic descent, especially those from Mexico.

Celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, Pope Francis said she reminds Catholics of her true essence as a woman, a mother and a "mestiza," or person of mixed race.

The Holy Father said she revealed herself to Saint Juan Diego as a "mestiza" to show "that she is everyone's mother."

Our Lady of Guadalupe is venerated as patroness of the Americas.



**Saint Matthew Parish,  
East Stroudsburg**



**Saint Nicholas Parish,  
Wilkes-Barre**



**Saint John Neumann Parish,  
Nativity of Our Lord Church,  
Scranton**



**Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish  
Jermyn**

*This was the first Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass at the parish. Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish recently started a weekly Spanish Mass at Noon on Sundays. All are invited.*



**Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg will celebrate a Quichua/Spanish Mass on January 4, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. The Mass will celebrate not only Theotokos but Our Lady of the Clouds, Patroness of the Equadorian people of Cuenca.**



## Ecumenical Prayer Service at Cathedral to Celebrate Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Members of the Diocese of Scranton together with members of various Christian congregations, and members of the Christian Communities Gathering of Northeastern Pennsylvania, will come together for an Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God on Wednesday, January 22, 2020, at 12:10 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, started in 1908, is celebrated each year throughout the world.

The “Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism” encourages ecumenical participation: “The

ecumenical movement is a grace of God, given by the Father in answer to the prayer of Jesus (35) and the supplication of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit. (36) While it is carried out within the general mission of the Church to unite humanity in Christ, its own specific field is the restoration of unity among Christians. (37) Those who are baptized in the name of Christ are, by that very fact, called to commit themselves to the search for unity. (38) Baptismal communion tends towards full ecclesial communion. To live our Baptism is to be caught up in Christ’s mission of making all things one.”

The theme for the 2020 observance is “They Showed Us Unusual Kindness” (cf. Acts 28:2). The theme and text for each year’s observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are chosen and prepared by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and representatives of the World Council of Churches.

In his homily at Vespers for the beginning of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 18, 2019, Pope Francis

said, “The worship befitting that kingdom, the worship demanded by justice, is a celebration that includes everyone, a feast in which gifts received are available to and shared by all. To take the first steps towards the Promised Land that is our unity, we must first of all recognize with humility that the blessings we have received are not ours by right, but have come to us as a gift; they were given to be shared with others. Then, we must acknowledge the value of the

grace granted to other Christian communities. As a result, we will want to partake of the gifts of others. A Christian people renewed and enriched by this exchange of gifts will be a people capable of journeying firmly and confidently on the path that leads to unity.”

Everyone is welcome to participate in the Ecumenical prayer service for Christian Unity. If you cannot attend the Cathedral service, please participate in local ecumenical celebrations.

## Saint Rose Parish Annex, Convent sold in Carbondale

Passionist Father James Price, pastor of Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Carbondale, and a city native who received his early education in the parish’s Catholic school, has announced the former Saint Rose Annex and Convent have been sold to Thomas Lavelle, who plans to convert the convent into a half-way house for women in recovery.

“The sale of this property will lift a great financial burden from the shoulders of Saint Rose Parish,” Father Price said, “but it is also the end of an incredible era.”

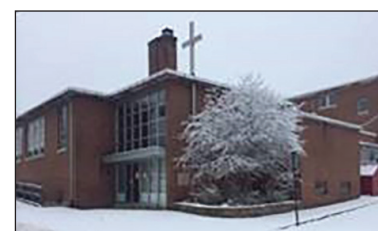
When the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) arrived in Carbondale in 1876, they established their Novitiate and Saint Rose Academy.

In 1886, the new Academy was constructed as an extension of the novitiate building.

On Oct. 21, 1956, Saint Rose Elementary School (known as the Annex) was dedicated, and the IHM convent, designed to accommodate 26 religious sisters, opened six months later.

Saint Rose School became part of the Sacred Heart School system and relocated to the school building at nearby Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish on Farview Street in 1998. When the IHM Sisters moved from the convent in 2004, the Annex and convent facilities were used for parish religious education and RCIA instruction.

During the tenure of former



Saint Rose pastor Monsignor William Feldcamp, Eucharistic adoration was established in one of Annex’s classrooms. Succeeding pastor, Father Charles Connor, transferred the adoration site to the convent chapel in 2004 and it remained there until September 2018, when it moved to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

In recent years the Annex was home to the Carbondale office of Catholic Social Services, until this past May, and also served as religious education classroom space until last January.

## Prayer Requests for Priests

The Daily Prayer Request for Priests schedule for the upcoming weeks is as follows:

December 19, Father Gregory Reichlen; December 20, Father August Ricciardi; December 21, Father Alex Roche; December 22, Jesuit Father Patrick Rogers; December 23, Monsignor Walter Rossi; December 24, Monsignor Dale Rupert; December 25, Father John Ruth; December 26, Passionist Father Paul Ruttle; December 27, Holy Cross Father John Ryan; December 28, Father Christopher Sahd; December 29, Father Thomas Sarnecki;

December 30, Father Arbogaste Satoun; December 31, Holy Cross Father Eric Schimmel; January 1, Pope Francis; January 2, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI; January 3, Bishop Joseph C. Bambera; January 4, Father Kenneth Seegar; January 5, Monsignor John Sempa; January 6, Father Gerald Shantillo; January 7, Saint Joseph Oblate Father Joseph Sibilano; January 8, Father Joseph Sica; January 9, Monsignor Constantine Siconolfi; January 10, Father Robert Simon; January 11, Father Andrew Sinnott; January 12, Father Joseph Sitko.

## DIOCESAN DATEBOOK

**Retrouaille Weekend, May 29-31, 2020** — Sponsored by the Diocese of Scranton, **Retrouaille** is a weekend program for married couples who may be experiencing tension, stress and loneliness in the marriage relationship. The program helps couples — even those separated and divorced — to communicate better and resolve conflicts in their relationships. **Retrouaille** is facilitated through a peer ministry of volunteer couples who focus on the tools of healthy communication, building intimacy and healing, just as they have down in their own marriages. To learn more about the May weekend or assisting as a volunteer couple, contact Phil & Sue Milazzo at [philmilazzo@outlook.com](mailto:philmilazzo@outlook.com) or (631) 338-5413; or Jen Housel at [jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org](mailto:jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org) or (570) 207-2213 ext. 1104.

## Communion Breakfast Celebrates Throop Parish History



This year’s annual Communion Breakfast at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Throop celebrated the tenth anniversary of the parish — established on Dec. 13, 2009 — and offered an opportunity to reflect on the past 125 years since Roman Catholics first organized as a faith community in the Lackawanna County borough. To commemorate the milestones, all Blessed Sacrament parishioners 75 years of age and older, and all altar servers and their parents were invited guests of the parish’s Holy Name Society. An added focus of the event was the ministry of the permanent diaconate, as two parish deacons — Deacon John Musyt of Blessed Sacrament and Deacon Matt Lorent of BVM Queen of Peace-Saint Veronica in Hawley/Lake Wallenpaupack, addressed the gathering. Deacon-candidate Nicholas Rocco, who has ties to Blessed Sacrament Parish, was also recognized. Principals of the recent parish breakfast program pictured are, from left, Deacon Musyt; Deacon Lorent; Society President Adam Nosak; Anthony “Zaz” Zelazny, toastmaster; Monsignor Michael J. Delaney, pastor; and Throop Mayor Joe Tropiak.



# Participation rate in Diocesan Annual Appeal is a focus at this time

As the Diocesan Annual Appeal continues in all 118 parishes, a renewed focus is being placed on the percentage of parishioners from each parish who donate to the Appeal.

“We would like to make a special request to all parishes to join with us at this time to help increase the number of parishioners who contribute to the Appeal. Gifts of any amount are welcome and the support of all of our parishes is very much appreciated,” James Bebla, Diocesan Secretary for Development, said.

“Last year we saw a decrease in the number of donors to the Appeal. So far this year, many loyal donors who give every year

have again pledged their support and several hundred parishioners who did not give last year have renewed their gift. We have also had a number of first-time donors contribute this year.”

Seventeen parishes have achieved a participation rate among their parishioners of 30% or more for the 2019 Diocesan Annual Appeal. More than 30% of parishioners have made contributions to the Annual Appeal in the following parishes: Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, Hawley; Epiphany Parish, Sayre; Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, Hanover Township; Holy Child Parish, Mansfield; Immaculate Heart

of Mary Parish, Dushore; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wyalusing; SS. Peter & Paul Parish, Towanda; Saint Boniface Parish, Williamsport; Saint Brigid Parish, Friendsville; Saint Elizabeth Parish, Bear Creek; Saint Frances X. Cabrini Parish, Carverton; Saint Joseph the Worker Parish, Williamsport; Saint Lawrence Parish, South Williamsport; Saint Michael Parish, Scranton; Saint Peter Parish, Wellsboro; Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish, Elkland; and Saint Thomas More Parish, Lake Ariel.

“At this point in the campaign, we are so grateful to see the number of parishes with

a participation rate of 30% or more,” Bebla said.

Diocesan ministries supported by gifts to the Annual Appeal include Catholic Social Services; parish social justice and faith formation programs; Catholic education in our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs; care for our current and retired priests and support for seminarians preparing for the priesthood; parish life and pastoral planning efforts; and communication programs such as *The Catholic Light* and Catholic Television.

To date, \$3.5 million in gifts and pledges has been raised, bringing the campaign to 70%

of the \$5 million goal. More than 19,000 donors have made pledges to this year’s Diocesan Annual Appeal. Fifteen parishes have surpassed their Annual Appeal goal so far.

Parishioners and friends who have not yet made an Appeal gift are asked to consider a donation in support of the wonderful ministries funded by the Appeal. Interested donors may make a gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal by visiting [www.annualappeal.org](http://www.annualappeal.org) to give online, by calling the Diocesan Development Office at (570) 207-2250 or by sending a donation to: Diocesan Annual Appeal, 300 Wyoming Ave., Scranton, PA, 18503.



SERVING IN *faith* WITH HOPE AND GRATITUDE

*Your generous donations support our retired clergy who have devoted their lives to the community*



**Monsignor John Bendik**

*“It just lifts my spirits to know that I’m in this kind of a setting (Villa Saint Joseph) with other retired priests who miss our people, but enjoy being with each other like real brothers!”*

**Father Joseph Horanzy**

*“Your gifts to the Appeal do so much to make our lives comfortable at the Villa Saint Joseph. I’m so grateful!”*



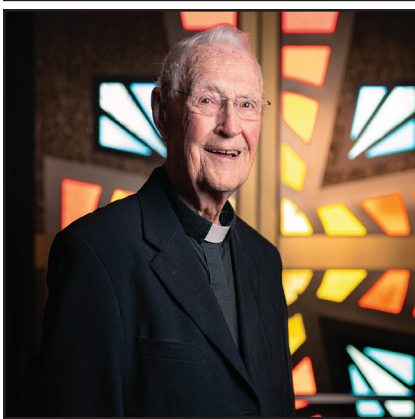
**Monsignor Stephen McGough**

*“There is no way retired priests can survive without assistance from the Diocese. I am thankful to people who contributed to the Appeal every year. Without that support, so many things would simply not happen.”*



**Monsignor William Feldcamp**

*“The Villa Saint Joseph is a great blessing to the Diocese of Scranton. There aren’t many Dioceses in the United States that have a facility this good to take care of their retired priests.”*



**Monsignor Arthur Kaschenbach**

*“The Appeal gives us the opportunity to show gratitude to God for the blessings we have that so many people don’t have.”*

**Father Vincent Langan**

*“The Diocesan Annual Appeal helps out in a big way...Without the generosity of the people, where do we go?”*



*Father Langan, a long-time supporter of the Diocesan Annual Appeal, passed away on Sept. 1, 2019*



## WILKES-BARRE –

After months of planning and construction, the opening of the new CYC Annex Child Care Center will help to meet the growing needs of child care in the Wyoming Valley.

Pre-school students helped to cut the ribbon for the new Catholic Youth Center facility located on South Washington Street on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019.

The new center includes two infant rooms, a pre-school classroom, kitchen area and laundry room.

“We are elated to be able to convert this vacant space into something valuable for our community,” Mark Soprano, Executive Director of the Catholic Youth Center, said. “We are excited to be able to provide more families in Luzerne County with quality child care!”

Within the last year, the Catholic Youth Center has seen a tremendous increase in need for its child care services. During the months of December 2018 through February 2019, the center went from an average enrollment of 227 children per day to more than 300 per day.

The new CYC Annex Child Care Center will provide additional space to increase enrollment by 45 children and will also create six new full-time positions at the agency.



**Mark Soprano, Executive Director of the Catholic Youth Center, center, cuts the ribbon on the new CYC child care annex on Dec. 4, 2019. (Photos/Eric Deabill)**

“Since opening our doors in 1948, the CYC has been a backbone of our community. This year marks the 20th year that the CYC has provided child care 24 hours a day. Over the years, our facility has become much more than just a place of recreational opportunities as we have also focused on educational programs and social development,” Soprano said.

Iris Ferrer, head teacher for the pre-school program, says the additional space is needed.

“There are a lot of families that are in need of child care,” Ferrer said. “I come from New York City. I moved here seven years ago and when I started working here five years ago, I noticed that the population is growing and a lot of people are coming from the city out here and

there’s a lot of Spanish-speaking people moving out here.”

Funding for the project was made possible by a grant provided by the Moses Taylor Foundation. Work on the Annex began this summer.

In addition to the grant money, more than 300 hours of volunteer time helped prepare the facility for its grand opening. Groups, including Highmark and Wilkes University, helped transform the vacant site into the new child care center.

“I’m a swimmer on the Wilkes University swim team and we were looking for some service opportunities and we currently swim here at the CYC and it was a perfect opportunity,” Justin Burda, a junior at Wilkes University, said. “It’s a total transformation. It makes me realize how important this is.”



**Iris Ferrer, head teacher for the pre-school program, left, involves students in a hands-on lesson using magnetic blocks.**

As an extension of the Church in the Diocese of Scranton, the CYC Annex Child Care Center will help develop and shape our region’s young minds.

“So many people hear about the CYC and see the front of our building but once they come inside, they really are in awe of what is taking place on a daily basis. We invite and welcome members of our community to come and see the new CYC Annex Child Care Center and learn more about our activities and programs,” Soprano added.

The annex location that has been renovated has a long history in the community. The space, which had been vacant since August 2018, was most recently occupied by Coordinated Child Care which offered subsidized care for working families.

The annex was also previously home to the Catholic Guild Studios and Catholic Social Services office until the early 1990’s at which time the Guild closed and Catholic Social Services moved to Northampton Street. Luzerne County also previously rented the space for its Single Point of Contact (SPOC) program which provided job training/placement for young parents. While the parent was attending training, submitting applications or attending job interviews, their children were cared for by CYC staff on site.

Even with the opening of the new facility, the planning is not complete. An outdoor courtyard with picnic tables, play space and greenery is expected to be added in the spring.

For more information about CYC programs, call (570) 823-6121.

## Regional chairs assist Diocesan Annual Appeal in Lackawanna & Wyoming Counties



**Maureen Price Bender and William Bender, center, and Father Andrew Kurovsky, left, accept Bishop Joseph Bambera’s invitation to serve as regional chairs for the 2019 Annual Appeal on behalf of Lackawanna and Wyoming counties.**

Serving the Annual Appeal on behalf of Lackawanna and Wyoming counties are Maureen Price Bender and William Bender, Factoryville, lay regional chairs, and Father Andrew Kurovsky, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Peckville, clergy chair.

The Benders are members of Saint Mary of the Lake, Lake Winola. The couple are the parents of five children, Mandy, Missy, William Jr., Dustin and Kevin, and 14 grandchildren.

Mrs. Bender comes from a strong Catholic tradition of supporting the Church. “Growing up, Holy Rosary Church was the center of our lives,” she explained. “Bill and I have supported the Annual Appeal for 20 plus years...I believe the Appeal is an opportunity to do what Jesus asks us to do so many times in the Scriptures: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, take care of the poor and less fortunate – to love our neighbors!

“But I also believe we must do more than just give,” she continued. “We must go out and enlighten others! When you hear someone say, ‘Oh I don’t give to that.’ Let them know they are hurting the poor, the hungry the homeless...the absolute most vulnerable portion of our society!”

Mr. Bender shares his wife’s convictions. “I helped my pastor conduct the very first Annual Appeal. I am a believer and a giver but it’s a numbers game. To be successful, Appeal support has to be more than monetary. It’s just as important to tell others of the good work that it does. I ask everyone to spread the word. Jesus was one man. He and his 12 apostles spread Christianity throughout the world. If every donor would spread the word there would be true growth and Appeal success.”

Father Kurovsky added, “Too many people are misinformed about the use of Diocesan Appeal funds. Without support for the Appeal it will be so much harder to feed people, to continue Catholic education, social outreach and a plethora of other ministries and services. We take care of own and reach out to other people in need in this region through the Annual Appeal.”

“It’s important to remind the faithful that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves,” he continued. “We belong to individual parishes which we love, but these same parishes belong to something larger, namely our Diocese. The Diocese shares the parish mission but on a larger scale. Likewise, each Diocese is part of the universal church. We are all connected and that’s what it means to be Catholic. We are one holy, universal church which begins on the local level. That’s why we need to support the Diocesan Annual Appeal.”

On a personal note, Father Kurovsky reminded donors that “funds for the care and education of priests don’t stop with the elderly in nursing homes and retired clergy.” He explained candidly, “If it wasn’t for the Appeal, I wouldn’t have received the treatment I needed to battle addiction as I have, and to resume my ministry at Sacred Heart of Jesus. I am leading this thriving parish because of a Diocese that has reached out and helped me... I’ve never been more excited about ministry.”



# Monsignor Joseph G. Rauscher

Monsignor Rauscher would always protest about people making a big fuss over him, but, if the truth be told, he silently relished the attention! So, I can say that between yesterday and today, he would be thrilled with how many people came to pay their respects.

Monsignor Rauscher and I would normally speak during the week, and we always spoke on Sunday afternoon.

On Sunday, November 10, at the end of our phone call, Monsignor Rauscher said to me, "Oh, I kept forgetting to ask you the past couple of months if would you preach at my funeral?" I told him that I would be honored to do so, and I hoped that it would not be any time soon.

I proceeded to ask him if he had any Scripture passages he would like and he told me to choose whatever I wanted, but then added, "If you can use the Gospel about giving a cup of water," that would be good. I knew then that Monsignor's time on earth was coming to an end.

I met Monsignor Rauscher in 1990 when I was assigned to Saint Nicholas. I remember our first encounter today just as clearly as the day it took place. We sat in his office, which for anyone who knew Monsignor Rauscher and had been to his office realizes that requires moving piles of paper, which I would otherwise call "junk," in order to accommodate any guest.

Once we were settled and got past the niceties, he asked me what my vision of priesthood was. Although he didn't state it at the moment, years later as we talked about our time together, both as his assistant and then our many years of friendship, he recounted that moment, and confessed that he asked the question to make sure that we were on the same page when it came to ministry.

Although there was a 20-year age difference between us, we came to discover that we were on the same page with many things.

The answer I gave in response to Monsignor Rauscher's question almost 30 years ago, was that the priest is a *pontifex* — a bridge builder between God and humanity. This is still my belief, and one which Pope Francis often advocates as he reminds priests, "You are called to build bridges, to pasture Christ's flock and to prepare fresh paths for the Gospel."

With my answer, I discovered that day that Monsignor Rauscher and I shared a common vision of what it meant to be a priest, a vision which I believe was the key to the success of our serving together at Saint Nick's, as well as, our abiding friendship.

I often tell people that I learned how to be a priest from Monsignor Rauscher, not the seminary. I learned from his example and actions, which we all know speak louder

than words, and I was learning up to the last time I saw him on November 5.

As we concluded our visit and I stood up to say "good bye," he asked me for a blessing, and then before I could ask him for his blessing, Monsignor said to me, "I think you need one too. Let me give you a blessing."

There is a human tendency to measure the success of one's life, no matter what our vocation. This is also true for priesthood.

In yet another conversation we had these past few months, Monsignor Rauscher talked about his inability to do the things that he had hoped to do once he retired. With his diminished ability because of lung disease, many of his plans did not formulate. Instead of bemoaning his situation, he quickly turned to his more than 50 years as a priest, stating, "I have loved my life. I have had a good life and I think I was successful. I am proud of what I did, and I am grateful for the many people whose lives I have touched and who have touched my life. I am only sorry that I cannot continue to serve as I once did."

To be successful in any area of life — in any occupation — you must completely invest yourself. Monsignor Rauscher certainly invested himself in his priesthood and in the parishes in which he served. Some might say he did so to the extreme and to his own detriment, especially during his last years here at Saint Nick's...but that was Monsignor Rauscher.

He loved this parish, he loved the people, he loved being of service, and he wanted to be in the midst of everything. Once again, perhaps a little too much sometimes!

Today's Gospel is not one which we normally hear at funerals. But Monsignor Rauscher chose this because it speaks of the "Conditions of Discipleship" — the call to discipleship, a call which Monsignor lived to the fullest and encouraged those he served to live as well.

As Pope Francis said at the canonization Mass for Pope Saint Paul VI and Saint Oscar Romero, "Jesus is radical. He gives all and he asks all. He gives a love that is total and asks for an undivided heart. Jesus is not content with a percentage of love; we cannot love him twenty or fifty or sixty percent. It is all or nothing."

Monsignor Joseph Rauscher gave all to Jesus and to his Church. He loved being a priest. He loved serving God's people and he gave that "cup of cold water" to the "little ones," the faithful to whom he ministered, as well as to his family, his friends and truly anyone he encountered.

As most of us know, Monsignor Rauscher was very proud of his German heritage, and this was especially evident during the German Night celebrations here at Saint



**Deacon Kenneth Brennan**

**Saint Brigid Parish,  
Friendsville**

**Ordination  
Year: 2004**

**DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AS A DEACON IN THE PARISH WHERE YOU ARE ASSIGNED. WHAT KIND OF SERVICE MINISTRY ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?**

I serve at all funeral, weekend and Holy Day Masses and preach every other weekend. I lead RCIA and train all altar servers, lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, in addition to visitations to the sick. I preside at weddings, baptisms and funeral services outside of Mass.

**WHAT IS MOST FULFILLING ABOUT SERVING IN OUR DIOCESE AS A PERMANENT DEACON?**

People let me share their lives and relationships with God. I get to walk with people on their journey in faith with all their challenges and all their joy.

**WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT SERVING AS A PERMANENT DEACON?**

To remember what a great privilege and responsibility it is to serve the people of God, and that serving God is not optional for me. God will ask me, "What did you do for the least of my people?" I will be judged upon that answer.

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A MAN WHO FEELS CALLED TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE AND IS CONSIDERING TAKING THE NEXT STEP?**

Always remember that the only power a deacon has is to serve God by serving others.

Nicholas when Monsignor led the traditional German folk song, *Schnitzelbank*.

Monsignor died in the early morning hours of the feast of one of his German compatriots, the 13th-century bishop of Cologne and Doctor of the Church, Saint Albert the Great. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, Saint Albert tells us that "God with all sweetness pours himself out upon the blessed."

Although none of us knows when our loved ones enter the blessedness of heaven, our first reading today from the Book of Wisdom reminds us that "the souls of the just are in the hand of God" and speaks very clearly of God's love for those who have died — that God is caring for the faithful departed just as he did when they were alive, and now that they are in his hand, they shine and "abide with him in love."

Now, Monsignor Rauscher abides with God in love. There is no trouble breathing,

seeing or walking. Everything is perfect and I pray that whatever room in the Father's house he is in, he has not cluttered it up in less than a week!

Today, we present Monsignor Rauscher to God and give thanks for the great gift God gave us in the life and ministry of Monsignor Joseph Rauscher.

May "God with all sweetness" pour himself out upon Monsignor Rauscher and count him among the blessed. May the Blessed Virgin Mary place Monsignor in the arms of her Son and as we have prayed for Monsignor Rauscher, may he now be our intercessor before the throne of God.

*Excerpted from the homily by Monsignor Walter R. Rossi at the Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Monsignor Joseph G. Rauscher on November 21 at Saint Nicholas Church in Wilkes-Barre.*



# Family to Family food basket program helped thousands

SCRANTON – The line started forming hours before the doors of the Scranton Cultural Center even opened. Wearing jackets and hats to stay warm, seniors, parents and individuals looking for a helping hand all waited for the Family to Family Food Basket Program to kick off.

For more than 30 years, the Family to Family program has provided families in need with a food basket to prepare a complete Thanksgiving dinner at home for their friends and family.

For the last five years, the Robeson family has helped lead the program.

“We prepared to serve 2,800 people,” Linda Robeson said.

Before the first recipients began filing into the Scranton Cultural Center, Father Jeffrey J. Walsh, V.E., Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, led organizers and volunteers in prayer.

Many of those who volunteer for the annual program are from Diocesan schools or parishes.

“I just like to help out and I just love seeing everyone’s face. It is really nice,” Kara Judge said.

Judge is an eighth grade student at Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton. She has volunteered at this program before.

“There are certain stations and you just bag up the food and then



Organizers of the Family to Family food basket program begin the distribution of food on Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2019 at the Scranton Cultural Center. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

the families take the food and the older kids will help bring it out to their cars,” Judge said.

Judge and her friend Caroline Kennedy, also an eighth grade student at Saint Clare/Saint Paul School, were in charge of the apple juice and cranberry station.

“It makes me feel good, refreshing in a way to just help everybody out!” Caroline Kennedy said.

“It just makes me feel so good knowing that I’m helping other people,” Judge added.

While it takes months to prepare for the annual Family to Family program, Linda Robeson says the event would not be able to take place without all the volunteers and students who help out.

“The kids are so wonderful because they’re so willing to do whatever you ask them to do so that makes it just as nice,” Robeson said. “It is really organized chaos

because people have been coming for so long and it’s such a family experience and they know their jobs. They come in and start bagging turkeys and the yams and everything else!”

Even after all of the food baskets had been distributed, organizers said they are still in need of donations to pay the food bill.

“Things are a little bit short this year and unfortunately the price of turkeys went up so our bill is about \$5,000 or \$6,000 higher than it was last year. Everybody is trying to do so much for everybody but money is a little slow this year. I’m sure with the Grace of God everything will come through!” Robeson said.

If you’d like to make a donation, you can make an online donation at [www.familytofamilypa.org](http://www.familytofamilypa.org) or you can send a payment to: PO Box 13, Scranton, PA 18501.

# Commissioning of Lay Ministry Formation Candidates



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Lay Ministry Formation program on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 at the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Scranton. Three women, Sarah Rodriguez Hazelton, Johanna Milot and Joan Susan Roginski, received the Certificate in Lay Ministry Formation. The Diocesan Office for Parish Life encourages parish leaders to consider application for the Diocesan Certificate in Lay Ministry for January 2020. For more information, visit [www.dioceseofscranton.org](http://www.dioceseofscranton.org) or call (570) 207-2213.

# Social Justice Grants to be celebrated in January

On January 22, the Office for Parish Life will be hosting an event to celebrate the success of the Social Justice Trust Fund Grants.

Each spring, the Office for Parish Life receives applications for the Social Justice Trust Fund Grant. Parishes apply for funding to support any program related to service to their community. Recipients have used funding to support parish food pantries, to integrate Catholic Social Teaching into religious education programs, and even to support pro-life advocacy efforts. These grants have a major impact on our communities because they help us to promote service and social justice on a local level.

We want to elicit advice on the best ways to improve the grant process. We hope to explore possible expansions to the grant program and to improve your experience with the application process! With some advice from the people in our parishes who are working with these grants on a daily basis, we may be able to expand the grants to provide more funding and better support to parish social ministry teams.

If you are interested in attending this event to learn more about the grant, or if you would like to present about the service events happening at your parish, please contact Katy Windels at the Office for Parish Life.



The Diocese of Scranton

# The Catholic Light

Published Every Third Thursday

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<b>January</b> 9 - 30	<b>February</b> 20	<b>March</b> 12	<b>April</b> 9 - 23
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<b>September</b> 17	<b>October</b> 8 - 29	<b>November</b> 19	<b>December</b> 17

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DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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The ISLI retreat is designed to provide knowledge and skills necessary to excel in both the leadership and membership roles of task oriented groups. During the retreat, participants take part in small group tasks that allow the students to do the following:

- Make decisions
- Examine leadership styles
- Practice leadership behavior
- Learn about positive communication
- Develop self-motivational skills and learn problem solving



# Young adults call National Catholic Youth

# Conference “amazing” and “powerful”

DECEMBER 19, 2019 • THE CATHOLIC LIGHT

THE CATHOLIC LIGHT • DECEMBER 19, 2019

By Eric M. Deabill  
Editor-in-Chief

INDIANAPOLIS – Loud cheers filled Lucas Oil Stadium, the home of the Indianapolis Colts, on Nov. 21, but it wasn't because of football fans.

With 20,000 youth inside for the opening night of the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), the clapping and screaming was for a surprise guest.

Pope Francis recorded a video message which was played at the beginning of the biennial conference on large TV monitors.

“I send you an affectionate greeting and my prayers at this moment of encounter that you are living. May it be an opportunity to deepen your faith and communion,” the Holy Father said. “May it light your missionary hearts with the courage and strength to live in and with the Lord always as a Church sent forth.”

In the video message, Pope Francis reminded the young adults that many people do not know Jesus.

“Go, go and take the world with you. Go and fill your surroundings, even the digital ones. Not of convictions. Not to convince others. Not to proselytize. But to bear witness of the tenderness and mercy of Jesus.”

## YOUNG ADULT REACTION

A total of 131 people from the Diocese of Scranton, including four priests, one parish life coordinator and one seminarian, traveled to

Indianapolis to experience NCYC. Eleven different parishes were represented for the inspiring, three-day conference with the theme, “Blessed, Broken, Given.”

During the conference, young adults participated in Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, interactive presentations and much more.

Juan Lugo, 16, a parishioner of Saint Matthew Parish in East Stroudsburg, says the experience brought him closer to God.

“It was amazing. The experience is a ton of fun and all the people you get to meet are amazing. They're really nice. It's just a great thing to explore your faith with other people that are the same age as you.”

Lugo says NCYC gave him a greater realization that God is always present in our midst.

“What really struck me is the young people that have gone through some really tough experiences throughout their life – and they go on stage and express all of that – and you can relate with them!” he added.

Luke Sullivan, 17, a parishioner of Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish in Hanover Township, says the conference was much more than he thought it would be.

“I feel changed. I feel closer with the kids in my youth group,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan says the conference challenged him to leave his comfort zone and meet new people.

“I realize that I need to tell myself that it's okay that I'm not perfect. I don't need to be perfect, I just need to be me!” he explained.

## ADORATION A HIGHLIGHT

As they reflected on their experience at the three-day conference, many of the students found one of the highlights to be Eucharistic Adoration, which was held the second night at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Meleena Confletti, 15, a parishioner at Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Moscow, had never experienced Adoration before.

“It was powerful. It was so quiet,” Confletti said.

Confletti and her fellow parishioner, Lexi Richardson, 14, of Gouldsboro, both said they felt the presence of God during Adoration and were able to have a personal connection with Him.

“It was so much more than I expected. My sister went two years ago and she was telling me all about it and how incredible it is and how at Adoration everyone was silent and I wasn't expecting that because 20,000 people cannot be quiet, but they were!” Richardson said.

Billy Chechel, 17, a parishioner of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Brodheadsville, agreed.

“It's just truly amazing to see how many kids believe the same thing as you. It's just really amazing that you're not the only one out there!” Chechel said.

Chechel also took part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Adoration, as did hundreds of others from around the nation.

“It feels much different than going to your own parish. It was amazing,” Chechel added.

Leading up to Eucharistic Adoration, Rev. Jeffrey Tudgay, J.C.L., pastor, Saint Eulalia Parish, explained for his youth ministry group that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist.

“It's one thing to text our friends, it's one thing to call, it's one thing to even FaceTime our friends, but it's another thing to be physically present with our friends. That is what God does for us because he realizes how crucial it is to be physically present with and for us and that's what Eucharistic Adoration is all about,” Rev. Tugday explained.

## PROGRAMS HAVE IMPACT

During the course of the conference, the young adults and chaperones had the opportunity to attend five interactive sessions of their choice on varying topics. There was a wide array of subject matter, ranging from the saints to the bible and prayer and even balancing faith and sports.

Aubrey Jumper, 16, a parishioner of Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top, found one session regarding dating and relationships to be especially impactful.

“He helped us with relationship advice and I really liked that one because it can really help me in the future. It will let me know what to do in situations that come up in my life when it comes to relationships and people,” Jumper said.

Another session offered young adults five steps to become a teenage saint. Father Leo Patalinghug, who is best known as

“the cooking priest,” told program attendees to reach out to God.

“The first step in becoming a saint is realizing that you are not a saint and you need help,” Father Patalinghug said.

Isabella Giardina, 14, a parishioner of Saint John the Evangelist Parish in Pittston, was particularly touched by the words of Immaculee Ilibagiza, a motivational speaker who discussed forgiveness and how her Catholic faith helped her survive during the Rwandan genocide.

“You always hear about miracles, praying to Jesus and he answers, but it was crazy to hear it in person and think this actually happened!” Giardina said.

## CLOSING MASS INSPIRES

The final event of NCYC 2019 was a closing Mass celebrated by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis – as well as several hundred priests and six bishops concelebrating.

“Christ and his young church are indeed alive!” Archbishop Thompson exclaimed, noting that at NCYC “grace has flowed abundantly in various ways.”

He encouraged the young adults to “remain Christ-centered...and trust in the grace of the Holy Spirit that has signed, sealed and claimed you as a beloved child of God.”

For the delegation from the Diocese of Scranton, it was the perfect way to bring their experience to a close.

“The Mass at the end, how everyone came together and it was

a big finale and sending off, I really liked that whole experience,” Aubrey Jumper said.

“I couldn't believe how many priests there were. I was so shocked!” Meleena Confletti added.

Each night of the conference, including after the closing Mass, all of the young adults from the Diocese of Scranton met in small groups with their youth ministry leaders and chaperones. They discussed the events of each day and many kept a prayer journal to remember their experiences.

At a time when many people feel young adults are leaving the Catholic Church, those who attended NCYC found themselves refreshed and invigorated by seeing 20,000 people celebrating their faith in a large arena.

“God is alive in all of us and he is still continuing His work through young people,” Jumper said.

“All these people want to learn about God and Jesus and it's just reassuring,” Giardina said.



An estimated 20,000 young adults took part in the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.



Juan Lugo, center, a parishioner of Saint Matthew Parish, participates in an interactive activity during the conference's thematic village.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis serves as principal celebrant for the closing Mass of NCYC 2019 on Nov. 23, 2019.



Diocesan pilgrims from Saint John the Evangelist in Pittston gather together at the hotel to reflect on the second full day of NCYC 2019.



Olivia DiMattio of Saint Catherine of Siena Parish sings during the NCYC Top Talent competition.



Young adults from Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish help put together meals for “Pack Away Hunger.”



Pilgrims from Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top pose for a picture inside Lucas Oil Stadium.



Young adults and chaperones from Saint Luke Parish in Stroudsburg enjoy the first day of NCYC.



The Diocesan delegation for NCYC poses for a group shot inside Lucas Oil Stadium following the conclusion of the final Mass.



Parishioners from Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish in Hanover Township reflect on their experiences during small group discussion.



Elizabeth Nemitz, right, enjoys a laugh with a friend during one of the programs entitled “Tell Your Story.”



Members of Saint Eulalia Parish in Roaring Brook Township take a group photo inside the Indianapolis Convention Center.



## Helen Gohsler steps down after leading the Scranton PHL Chapter for 37 years



Above left, Helen Gohsler, left, is pictured with Anne Domin, her successor as president of the Scranton Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life. At right, Helen is shown with her husband Richard, seated, and other family members. From left, Carmello Berrios, Irene Leubbing, Nancy Kinahan and Dina Berrios.

### By Maureen Manzano Special to *The Catholic Light*

Following the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, Helen Gohsler accepted an invitation to attend a meeting of the newly formed Pennsylvanians for Human Life, Scranton Chapter, which sought to protect the sanctity of human life.

Since then, she's never turned back, making the protection of life from conception until natural death her lifelong mission.

"I guess that will go on forever," Gohsler said to a crowded Fiorelli's Catering in Peckville, as hundreds recently gathered to show their appreciation for her 37 years as president of the Scranton Chapter, which is marking its 45th year.

Gohsler said she decided to step down to spend more time with her husband, Richard. "The time has come and I have decided this has to be it," she said. "He needs me now."

Many religious and pro-life leaders paid tribute to Gohsler's dedication to protecting the unborn as well as those whose lives are threatened with euthanasia.

Father Jeffrey Walsh, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese, said he has known Gohsler since he was four years old and met her at his native parish, the former Saint Vincent de Paul in North Scranton.

Representing Bishop Joseph C. Bambera, who was attending the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting in Baltimore, Father Walsh said Gohsler's dedication to the unborn echoed concerns expressed in the USCCB's Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities.

"Our concern is only intensified by the realization that a policy and practice that results in well over a million deaths from abortions each year cannot but diminish respect for life in other areas," Father Walsh offered, quoting the pastoral plan.

"We are guided by a key insight regarding the linkage between abortion and these other important issues: Precisely because all issues involving human life are interdependent, a society which destroys human life by abortion under the mantle of law unavoidably undermines respect for life in all other contexts."

He continued, "If this is compromised — and we've seen that — it's just a slippery slope to all of the other moral issues. So to have defenders and people who are willing to speak out and pray and be a voice to the voiceless as Helen and so many others have done over the years, we are so grateful for that powerful witness."

Rabbi Michael Fine recalled the many times he worked with Gohsler in fighting for the sanctity of life, whether it was protecting the unborn or the ill and infirm threatened with euthanasia.

"You're a special group, and I, and the people that I represent, feel what you feel in regard to the sanctity of life and our responsibility to preserve that sanctity," he said. "I remember times I was with you in Harrisburg. I spoke on behalf of our traditional views and they are unswerving, unalterable and irrevocable — God's law, God's view of us. He gives life and He takes life, and He alone. Our job is to preserve life, and to protect particularly those who need special protection."

The Rev. J. Harry McElroy said Gohsler's legacy will continue to affect so many lives. "Your legacy will be found in the faithful labor of those who have followed you," he said, recalling her response to a reporter several years ago about the chapter being unwavering in its mission.

"Then, you said it was your continuing intention to speak out for a cause that others would like to silence. You've done it for 37 years. What a blessing it has been!"

Michael Ciccocioppo, executive director of the PA Pro-Life Federation, said

## How to Get to the March for Life

*Buses Scheduled for 47th Anniversary Event in Washington, D.C.*

Pro-life advocates throughout the Diocese of Scranton will join tens of thousands of their counterparts from across the nation for the 47th annual March for Life on Friday, Jan. 24, in Washington, D.C.

Regional chapters of the Pennsylvanians for Human Life (PHL) will offer round-trip bus transportation. Bus reservations are requested as soon as possible.

In Washington, D.C., participants will come together with other activists for a peaceful march to protest the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which legalized abortion-on-demand in America, resulting in the deaths of nearly 60 million unborn children.

Considered the world's largest pro-life event, the annual March for Life convenes with the traditional noontime rally on the National Mall, followed at approximately 1 p.m. by the march that proceeds on Constitution Avenue toward the U.S. Capitol, ending outside the Supreme Court of the United States.

"Life Empowers: Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman" is the theme for next month's march, as the 2020 event is tying itself to the women's suffrage movement for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

Jeanne Mancini, head of the March for Life, remarked how two noted suffragists of their day, Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony, were themselves staunchly against abortion.

Following the March, which has been held every January since 1974, participants may visit their local congressional delegations.

The PHL will sponsor buses leaving from communities throughout the Scranton

Diocese. Departure times and costs vary. Details on bus schedules and costs throughout the region can be obtained from the following contacts:

### HONESDALE

Contact Angie at Saint John the Evangelist Parish, (570) 253-4561.

### SCRANTON

Bus departs Scranton from the Keyser Oak Shopping Center at 6:30 a.m. and returns at approximately 11:30 p.m. Cost: \$35 for adults; \$20 for college students. Younger students may attend free of charge if accompanied by parent/guardian. Reservations may be made by contacting the Scranton PHL Pro-Life Center office, located at 400 Wyoming Ave., at (570) 343-5099.

### BRADFORD COUNTY

Contact Rob Howard at (570) 395-3417 or rshoward1@frontiernet.net. Bus departs from Athens at 5 a.m., with pick-up stops in Wysox, Wyalusing and Tunkhannock.

### WILLIAMSPORT

Contact Evelyn Rall, (570) 398-0722. Cost is \$20 per person.

### WYOMING VALLEY

Contact Chris Calore, (570) 824-5621. Bus departs at 6:15 a.m. (following the 5:50 a.m. Mass) from Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 116 Hughes St., Swoyersville; approximate return time is 10:30 p.m. Cost: \$65 per person, includes bus transportation and buffet dinner; reservations requested by Jan. 11. Forward check made payable to PHL to Chris Calore, 37 Elder St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702.

it was just ten years ago when Gohsler was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federation.

"You have been a strong pro-life voice and you have been a model for the pro-life groups across the state," he said. "Thank you for your faithful service and outstanding leadership."

Anne Domin, incoming president and one of the founders of the Scranton PHL Chapter, discussed Gohsler's involvement in the early years from volunteering to eventually becoming president.

Numerous milestones have included establishing a PHL office and Pro-Life Center that attracted nationally recognized speakers, such as Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a former abortionist who became a strong

advocate for the protection of the unborn, and Father Frank Pavone, director of Priests for Life.

"Because of her efforts, young people are more pro-life than their parents today," Domin said.

"Helen, in all of this, you have directed every activity," she continued. "You supervised every event and you have had a huge impact on countless people and society at large and we are so grateful that you did."

In offering the evening's benediction, the Gohsler's pastor, Father Cyril Edwards of Mary Mother of God Parish in North Scranton, summed up the thoughts of many in attendance.

"Somebody will succeed her, but nobody will replace her," he said.



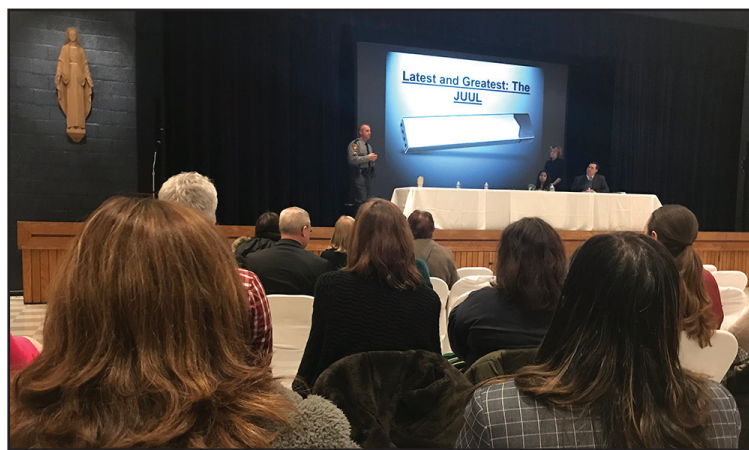
# Parents learn dangers of vaping during “Evening with the Experts”

SCRANTON – The U.S. Surgeon General has called it an epidemic and local experts agree, highlighting the importance of parents understanding and taking action regarding youth e-cigarette use.

“Statistics show that in 2018, more than 3.6 million youth, including one in five high school students and one in 20 middle school students were e-cigarette users,” Trooper Robert Urban said during an “Evening with the Experts” on Dec. 5, 2019.

Recognizing the health risks associated with vaping, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System put together a program featuring panelists from the fields of law enforcement, health and education. More than 30 parents and educators attended the session which was held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

“Less than a decade ago, the e-cigarette was an obscure product marketed as a safe, tobacco-free alternative to conventional cigarettes by a single company in China,” Trooper Urban explained. “Now it is a \$3 billion global industry with over 600 brands and 8,000 flavors and liquids.”



**Trooper Robert Urban with the Pennsylvania State Police presents information on the dangers of vaping during an “Evening with the Experts” program on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019. (Photo/Eric Deabill)**

The panel began by explaining exactly what e-cigarettes are -- battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, flavorings and other ingredients to the user. The panelists then explained that they do not create harmless “water vapor,” instead they create an aerosol that can contain harmful chemicals.

Benjamin Tolerico, principal of Holy Cross High School in Dunmore, highlighted that every school district is confronting problems associated with vaping and e-cigarette usage.

Tolerico highlighted the

difference between the current use of e-cigarettes by students and the cigarette-smoking generation decades ago.

“Years ago, if a kid was smoking in the bathroom, you could certainly smell it...now it’s not these giant plumes of smoke or vape. You really can’t see anything and they’re odorless,” Tolerico explained.

As of Dec. 4, 2019, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 2,291 cases of lung injury linked to vaping. It also reported 48 deaths have been confirmed in 25 states and the

District of Columbia.

Dr. Sreelatha Naik, a specialist in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine with Geisinger, explained many of the health dangers associated with vaping.

“There is so much inflammation in the lungs that it is hard for the lungs to take oxygen from the air,” Dr. Naik said as she showed photographs of lungs damaged by vaping and described her experiences in treating patients locally.

The panel explained that e-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Some look like regular cigarettes, cigars or pipes while larger e-cigarettes such as tank systems – or “mods” – do not look like other tobacco products.

Parents also learned that some e-cigarettes look like other items commonly used by young people, such as pens and USB flash drives.

Judy Price, First Assistant District Attorney for Lackawanna County, ended the panel discussion by discussing ways that local, state and federal officials are working to tackle the vaping problem.

“Right now, it’s not illegal to buy or sell to minors vaping products, under our (Pennsylvania) laws as they exist. It’s illegal to sell

tobacco so we are trying to broaden our tobacco laws to include vaping products,” Price said.

Price also emphasized that all Lackawanna County school districts, including the Diocesan School System, participate in the Safe Schools Coalition where information on topics like vaping is discussed on a regular basis.

This was the second “Evening with the Experts” hosted by the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System. The first program, held earlier this year, focused on the potential dangers associated with social media usage.

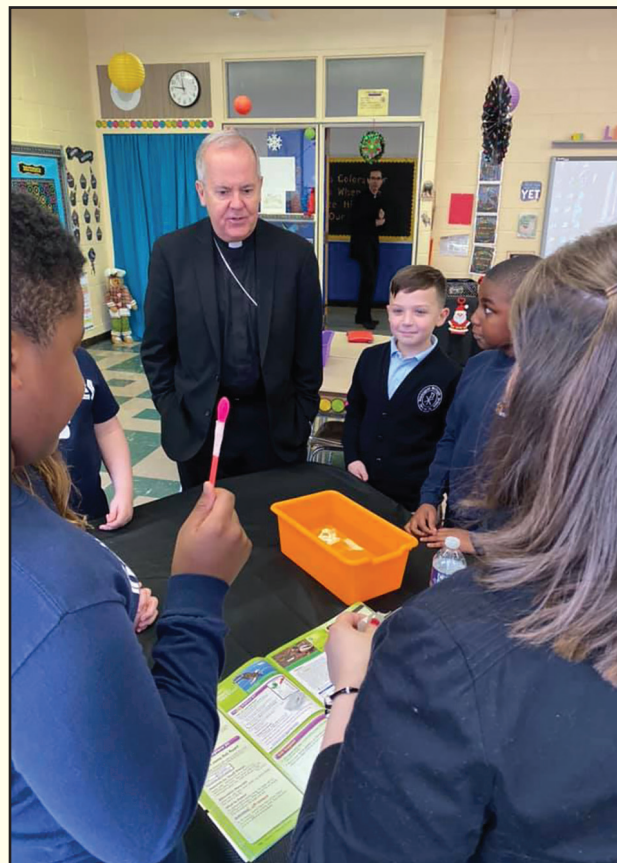
## What can you do as a parent or caregiver?

- Talk to your child about why e-cigarettes are harmful. It is never too late.
- Set a good example by being tobacco-free
- Learn about the different shapes and types of e-cigarettes and the risks for young people at [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)

## A Commitment to our children...Bishop Bambera continues visiting our students and classrooms



**Notre Dame High School & Elementary School, East Stroudsburg**



**Monsignor McHugh School, Cresco**



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All Saints Academy in Scranton



Students and their families from Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton recently collected hundreds of mittens, hats & scarves that were donated to Mollie's Mittens and distributed to the less fortunate in the region.



Saint Jude School in Mountain Top



Diocese of Scranton principals and faculty STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) Coordinators recently attended a professional development seminar. The day focused on new resources that are available and offered the opportunity to register for the Notre Dame (University) Educator Trustee Fellow Program.



Student Council Induction at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre



Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore



Students from Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter collected winter necessities like gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and socks and donated them to the Kids Closet, located in the Care and Concern Clinic in Pittston, which helps children under the age of 16 with clothing items.





Chess Club at **Good Shepherd Academy** in Kingston



**Notre Dame Elementary School** in East Stroudsburg



The Individualized Instruction students at **Holy Cross High School** in Dunmore have completed their Christian Service at Marley's Mission. Nodyia deFreitas and Anna Brundage are shown here with Marley's Mission staff. Under the direction of their teacher, Ms. Regina Krieger, the girls had the opportunity to work the horses and help around the stables over the last few weeks.



**Holy Family Academy** in Hazleton



Sophomores from **Saint John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School** in Williamsport hold the Advent gift baskets that they made and then delivered to local pastors and religious sisters.



"Sally Sells Seashells, and You Can Too!" was the fall musical presentation of the seventh & eighth grade classes at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School** in East Stroudsburg.



**Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School** in Wilkes-Barre



**Saint John Neumann Elementary School** in Williamsport



**La Salle Academy** in Jessup



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Mission Message

Go Forth

By Father Brian J.T. Clarke  
Diocesan Director,  
Pontifical Mission Societies



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*“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.”*

Wise words from the second century philosopher, Epictetus. While I find his maxim to be packed with meaning and acknowledge his sage advice, I’m afraid I’m still working on listening as much as I speak.

I blame it on having kissed the Blarney Stone many years ago — I love to talk — and I’m convinced that in many situations that I need to talk. Talk about Blarney!

One would think that the work of evangelization would first consist of a lot of talking, that to be an effective evangelizer, preaching by word is key. While that is an essential component in sharing the Gospel message, listening is the first step in the work of preaching the Good News.

That’s the message that the newly appointed Prefect for the

Congregation of Evangelization has shared in his initial statements on his move from a diocesan bishop to the helm of this prefecture in Rome. Cardinal Luis Tagle, former archbishop of Manila, has been asked by Pope Francis to head up the office for Evangelization in Rome.



Cardinal Tagle

His appointment has given him a worldwide platform to inspire the faithful and the clergy to possess the spirit and the will to be a faithful evangelist. His Eminence so beautifully urges us to first embrace a “spirituality of listening, to God, to neighbors and to the signs of the times.”

Some may think that listening is a passive act by which we simply hear what people are saying. To listen really means that you’re active in absorbing what another is sharing. To listen is to receive and to be open to another, even if you don’t agree with what the person is saying.

This seems to be a crucial component of what Pope Francis refers to as accompaniment. We can truly draw others into the life of the Christ and the Church by listening and accompanying them on the often arduous path to surrender to God’s invitation to live with and for Him.

Cardinal Tagle encourages us to be deliberate and cautious in our interaction with others: “we are all in a hurry, rushing to say something, to issue a statement even when we have not heard yet. We have already something prepared without knowing what the question or statement is.”

As we approach the Solemnity of Christmas, let us first listen to the message of salvation that came 2,000 years ago, listen to that seemingly powerless baby in the crib. Then, let us resolve to listen to all of God’s people with love, with humility, and with gentleness.

  
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lonely world.*

*Christ bringing  
HOPE to a  
despairing world.*

*Christ bringing  
FORGIVENESS  
to a sinful world.*

*Christ bringing  
NEW LIFE  
to those who will  
receive him.*

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## Notice Regarding Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Minor

It is the policy of the Diocese of Scranton to report any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement. If you are a victim of sexual abuse committed by a priest, deacon, religious or lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton, you are encouraged to immediately report the matter to law enforcement. If any priest, deacon, religious, lay employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Scranton has cause or reason to suspect that a minor has been subjected to any form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, the matter will be reported to law enforcement.

It is also the policy of the Diocese to adhere to all civil and state regulations. To this end, the Diocese is equally committed to adhering to the norms of the *Code of Canon Law* and to upholding the tenets of the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which includes supporting victims of sexual abuse in their pursuit of emotional and spiritual well-being. As such, information regarding an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor should also be reported to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mary Beth Pacuska at (570-862-7551).

## Aviso al Respeto de Reportar el Abuso Sexual de Un Menor de Edad

Es la norma de la Diócesis de Scranton reportar cualquier alegación de abuso sexual de un menor de edad a las autoridades. Si usted es una víctima de abuso sexual cometido por un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o empleado laico, o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton, usted está obligado a reportar el asunto inmediatamente a las autoridades de la ley.

Si algún sacerdote, diácono, religioso, empleado laico o voluntario de la Diócesis de Scranton tiene sospecha de que un menor de edad ha sido sujeto a cualquier forma de abuso, incluyendo abuso sexual de menor de edad, el asunto será reportado a las autoridades de la ley.

Es la norma de la Diócesis defender todas las regulaciones civiles y del estado. Al fin de que la Diócesis esté comprometida igualmente a defender las normas del Código de Derecho Canónico y defender los principios de la Carta Para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes (Conferencia de los Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos), lo cual incluye apoyar a las víctimas de abuso sexual en pos del bienestar emocional y espiritual.

Por eso, información respecto a una alegación del asunto sexual de un menor de edad, debe ser reportada a la Coordinadora Diocesana de Asistencia para Las Víctimas, Mary Beth Pacuska, a (570-862-7551).

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## Spiritual Offerings

**Meeting of Lay Carmelites** — DEC. 21, hosted by Our Lady of the Mountains Lay Carmelite Chapter; meetings held on the third Saturday of each month, from 9 to 11 a.m., at St. Joseph's Oblate Seminary, 1880 Route 315, Laflin (Pittston). For more information, contact Rose at (570) 507-2373 or Chris at (570) 239-8094.

**Spiritual Support Group: Scranton Mental Health Ministry** — DEC. 28 & JAN. 11, hosted by the Cathedral of St. Peter in Scranton; providing a safe, supportive space for individuals who are experiencing mental illness. Group meets at 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month in the Bishops Hall at the Cathedral Rectory, 315 Wyoming Ave. Meetings will be approximately 90 minutes; refreshments provided. Participating Scranton parishes include St. Peter's; Mary, Mother of God; and Immaculate Conception. For more information, contact Deacon Ed Shoener at the Cathedral, (570) 344-7231.

**Scranton Mental Health Ministry: Spiritual Support Group for Family & Friends** — JAN. 2, hosted by the Cathedral of St. Peter in Scranton; providing a safe, supportive space for parents, family members and friends of individuals who are experiencing mental illness. Group meets at 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month in the Bishops Hall at the Cathedral Rectory, 315 Wyoming Ave. Meetings will be approximately 90 minutes; refreshments provided. Participating Scranton parishes include St. Peter's; Mary, Mother of God; and Immaculate

Conception. For more information, contact Deacon Ed Shoener at the Cathedral, (570) 344-7231.

**First Friday Pro-Life Prayer Vigil** — JAN. 3, monthly pro-life gathering to offer prayerful witness at the new Planned Parenthood location in Wilkes-Barre at 101 North Main St. (across from King's College); recitation of the Rosary begins at 10 a.m. for the special intentions of an end to abortion and closure of the Planned Parenthood facility. All faithful are welcome.

**Evening of Prayer with the Sisters of IHM** — JAN. 8, sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; monthly prayer service held on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel at the IHM Center, 2300 Adams Ave., Scranton (top of University Ave., beyond Marywood University). All are welcome. For more information, call (570) 346-5404.

**Monthly Meeting of the Lay Fraternity of St. Dominic** — JAN. 12, hosted by St. Thomas Aquinas Chapter 413; afternoon gathering held on the second Sunday of every month at St. John the Evangelist Church, Honesdale. All professed members, those in the process of formation or anyone interested in deepening their faith by following the Dominican spirituality and its four "pillars" (prayer, study, community and apostolate) are welcome. For more information, call Lay Dominican MaryAnn Cavanaugh, formation director, at (570) 228-8624 or catholicohomeschoolmom@hotmail.com.

*Continued on Page 29*

## Celebrate Your Creation Day!

IT'S THE DAY GOD CREATED YOU  
THE MOMENT YOU WERE CONCEIVED, YOU WERE CREATED AND  
CAME INTO EXISTENCE. THEREFORE YOU SHOULD CELEBRATE  
YOUR CREATION DAY, it's the day God created you.

Take your earthly Birthday and back it up nine months  
(or your known conception day)  
to START CELEBRATING YOUR CREATION DAY

- You can celebrate both your Creation Day and Birthday
- Two days every year when it's all about you
  - Your preferred dinner?
  - Perhaps gifts?
  - Dessert?
  - Feeling LOVED
- You can Thank God for creating you
- IT IS Truth

The Day of your conception is the day God created you and the first day you were alive, not your earthly Birthday. God wants us to celebrate both, so START CELEBRATING YOUR CREATION DAY.

Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."



# XLT

A Night of Music, Stories, and Adoration  
St. Joseph Marelo  
Monday, January 13, 2020  
7:00pm-9:00pm

**Music By Ben Wagner**  
Ben Wagner is an award-winning singer/songwriter from Wisconsin. He was named first place in the Great American Song Contest. Ben shares his faith through music across the nation

**Talk by Steph Fernandes**  
Steph is a blind Luzerne County assistant public defender and active musician at St. Ignatius Church. Award winner with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Association for the Blind



# Spiritual Offerings

**Gathering of the Secular Discalced Carmelites** — JAN. 19, canonically established community of the Diocese of Scranton; gatherings are usually held on the third Sunday of every month at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, Luzerne County. All are welcome, especially those who feel called to a deeper consecration in life and wish to experience Carmelite spirituality and community. Call Ann Marie Fierro (570) 454-4493 for more information.

**Meeting of the St. Joseph Secular Franciscan Fraternity** — JAN. 19, hosted at St. Joseph's Oblate Seminary, Route 315, Laffin. Liturgy of the Hours recited at 2 p.m. in the seminary chapel. Fraternity meets regularly on the third Sunday of every month; all professed members of the Secular Franciscans and interested men and women are welcome. Anyone interested in attending may contact Jim Gaffney at (570) 575-1703.

## Living Missionary Rosary



Queen of Angels Parish in Jessup celebrated October as Extraordinary Missionary Month with a Living Missionary Rosary devotion. Students from the parish's Faith Formation Program are pictured with Queen of Angels pastor Father Gerard McGlone.

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- **PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW** — Daily Trips Feb. 29 thru March 8.
- **PITTSBURGH PENGUINS 2-DAY – 2 GAMES!** — March 7-8 — Capitals at Penguins on Saturday, Hurricanes at Penguins on Sunday. Includes hotel.
- **AMERICAN DREAM MEGA MALL** — April 4 — Revolutionary new mall concept at the Meadowlands. Shops, theme parks, restaurants, year-round winter sports & recreation facilities all indoors and under one roof!
- **HOLLYWOOD CASINO AND TANGER OUTLETS** — April 4
- **SIGHT & SOUND DINNER THEATRE** — April 18 — "Queen Esther", dinner.
- **9/11 MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND WESTFIELD** — April 18
- **DEL LAGO RESORT & CASINO 2-DAY** — April 26-27 — Independent vacation in the Finger Lakes region. \$30 free slot play in the casino, big hotel spa discounts, 2 meals at the hotel and dinner on the way home at Aiello's Italian Restaurant.
- **ELLIS ISLAND** — May 2
- **AMERICAN GIRL PLACE, NYC** — May 9 — Lunch in their café.
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# Catholic Happenings

**Advent Pierogi Sale** — DEC. 21 & 22, sponsored by SS. Peter & Paul Parish in West Scranton; pierogi sale held before and after the weekend Masses celebrated on Saturday at 4 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m. in SS. Peter & Paul Church, 1309 West Locust St., Scranton. Cost: \$7 per dozen.

**Advent Choral Event: "Prepare Your Hearts for Christmas"** — DEC. 22, hosted by St. John Parish, 5171 Milford Road, East Stroudsburg; held from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in St. John Church. Advent season celebration incorporates readings, reflection and song performed by the St. John's Choir.

**Living Nativity Play 2019: "Two Babies in a Manger"** — DEC. 24, original live presentation inspired by the true story of a Russian orphan and his reaction when he hears the story of the first

Christmas; hosted at St. John the Baptist Church, 126 Nesbitt St., Larksville. Annual Christmas Eve play begins at 4 p.m., followed by celebration of the Christmas Vigil Mass in St. John Church. This year's new Christmas production is written and directed by Father Gerald Gurka, host pastor. For more information, call the parish office at (570) 779-9620.

**Adult Learner Open House** — JAN. 8, hosted by the Misericordia University Center for Adult and Continuing Education for adult learners interested in continuing their education; event held from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Huntzinger and Alden Trust Rooms (218-219) at Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall at Misericordia. Registration for the open house can be completed online at misericordia.edu/archopenhouse. For more information call (570) 674-6791.

## Blanket Campaign Warms the Needy



The fifth annual Blanket Campaign at Saint Luke Parish in Stroudsburg produced nearly 90 blankets donated by parishioners to help keep those in need warm during the cold winter months. Campaign organizers pictured include Victoria Armstrong, Marilyn Sparadino, Toni Cain, Ginger Lynch and Cheryl Mortimer.

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Based on my practice, which consists of estate planning and administration along with elder law, I find that clients are more comfortable discussing such matters in familiar surroundings. While I know this may seem unconventional to some, I believe I will be able to serve clients much better in this fashion.

If anyone is uncomfortable with home visits, I have a few locations where I can meet in an office setting. I look forward to meeting with my existing clients and especially meeting new clients that are looking for any assistance in estate or elder law matters.



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- Medicaid Application Assistance

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- Medicaid Application Assistance

### Estate Planning

- Powers of Attorney • Living Wills
- Wills • Trusts Guardianships



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# Rosary Prayers for America in Jermyn



Members of Our Lady of Grace Morning Prayer Group are pictured on the parish grounds of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Jermyn, where they gathered to participate in the annual "America Needs Fatima" campaign that simultaneously staged nearly 20,000 Rosary rallies across the United States. Shown in the foreground at far right is Sacred Hearts pastor Father John Ruth. Serving as Rosary Rally captain for the event was Mary Vadala.

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# The Catholic Light

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## Appeal Gifts at Work The Office for Parish Life in Your Community



### In Scranton - Pre-Cana Day

Married in a civil ceremony 15 years ago, Wilber and Mari Goris Gutierrez attended this program with 24 other couples to prepare for sacramental marriage so they would be "married as God would want us to be." The Pre-Cana Day of Reflection for couples is offered throughout the Diocese by Jennifer Housel, Director for Community & Family Development.



### In Hazleton - Social Justice

Donning an apron, Father Richard Polmounter, pastor, Saint John Bosco Parish, Conyngham, helps prepare the food and then greets guests at a monthly luncheon for the poor and homeless held at the Salvation Army. The meal is hosted by the parish with the support of an Annual Appeal Social Justice Grant.



### In Swoyersville - Catechist Camp

Father Brian J.T. Clarke, Diocesan Director of Pontifical Mission Societies, presented at day-long sessions attended by 100 parish catechists and DREs and offered in four locations. Some of the sessions focused on social justice issues, creating mission trips with a purpose and finding the extraordinary in ordinary life.

### Direct Support for Parishes

Of the money raised in the Annual Appeal, 3% is used for social justice grants available to every parish. New this year, 3% of the Appeal will also be offered to parishes through grants for faith formation programs.

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